

THE DIAL



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AN AESTHETIC SOVIET

BY GEORGE SANTAYANA

A SOVIET is a caucus of comrades, such as the sailors in a ship or the teachers in a college, who after hanging the captain or kicking out the president and trustees, assume joint control of the fabric in which they find themselves lodged, and declare it to be their property by right of eminent domain and of actual possession. In theory theirs is a spontaneous union and a spiritual bond. An unquestioning unanimity, childlike and brotherly, animates everybody; and it is no accident that the Soviet bears a Russian name, for there could hardly be elsewhere such a casual and affectionate way of superposing, as in children's games, a spiritual harmony upon spiritual chaos. Here is the perfect ideal of a free society: that each member should be an absolute spirit, grounded in itself and responsible to itself only, and yet that somehow it should transcend its isolation and feel the exhilaration of living and thinking in unison with a legion of kindred spirits, each no less free and absolute than itself.

The word Soviet is new, but the thing is extremely old; if not as old as spirit—for spirit in its depths as well as in its heights is essentially solitary—yet at least as old as play. How were ships invented or colleges first conceived? A boy may have gone wading for pleasure, alone or with an adventurous friend; and amid their splashing experiments with logs and rafts they may have gradually learned to become boatmen, fishermen, pirates, colonists, and merchants. An old man may have loved conning his adventures and maxims to himself, or decorating and sharpening them for the

benefit of the gaping bystanders; or he may have compared notes with an old crony, or wrought up his rival fancy to telling taller stories or giving more persuasive counsels: whence academies and parliaments. Very ponderous political and moral mechanisms may thus arise in play and be nothing but Soviets ossified. Sporting clubs and mystical sects have always been perfect Soviets in their beginnings; and if the great religions have a different character and rather resemble imperial governments or armies, the reason is that they do not represent merely the devotional overflow or speculative margin of human wisdom, but profess seriously to adjust the individual to the forces that control his life: they come in the name of the Lord, with wrath in their voices and promises in their hands. Whenever a Soviet does the same, and would impose its authority by force or by eloquent dogmas, it evidently forfeits the spiritual spontaneity which I was assigning to it: it becomes an institution like any other, one more of those material dominations and powers amongst which spirit must thread its way.

Least subject of human things to this fatality would seem to be aesthetic feeling and aesthetic invention. What could be more spontaneous and uncontrollable than living intuition, and at the same time more innocent? Aestheticism is a refined sensuality, the gift of finding an immediate joy in the obvious; and the field of the aesthetically obvious is infinitely extensible: every caprice or marvel of form, natural or unnatural, is waiting in the limbo of essence for the hand or the eye that shall bring it to light. This field also contains all possible intensities, all the varieties of depth, of pleasure or horror, of which any one can be directly sensible. The immediate is shallow only in the sense of being all apparent, all light and fleeting actuality, without any hint or question of causes. It may seem silly or unreal to the working intellect; and yet if intuition be vain, what shall rescue existence from vanity? Essence, whether aesthetic or logical, has no need of being true of matter: it has a sufficient truth or reality in itself; and unearthliness in it may go as far as it will, the farther the better, as we see in music and in spiritual religion, provided the organ that breeds these original intuitions is not unhinged. Exuberance of fancy, as in the Elizabethan age, is then a sign of manly vigour, health liberally enjoyed, and the fruition of many subtle harmonies, not only in the ear but in the blood.

To clap these trooping visionary images on to nature and define all things in human terms has always been the impulse of dogmatic reason, following in the wake of animal sense and of dramatic fancy; but the pure aesthete exists by renouncing that troubled ambition, laughing at opinion, and hugging his naked images for their own sake, in their innocent immediacy. What could be simpler or more legitimate? Yet this has never been the practice of artists. Works of art are not aesthetically richer than natural things: far otherwise. Works of art are causes of wonder, interest, and admiration; but a person who looks for *beauty* primarily in the arts cannot have loved nature, and will never understand the piety of art. Artists are craftsmen working under the patronage of industry, religion, custom, sentiment, or pride. They are not aesthetes; yet if they are to excel in their crafts they must have a good eye and a deft hand, gifts which will carry with them much aesthetic sensibility; hence a particular aesthetic bias, partly personal, partly traditional, will be discernible in their handiwork. Silently, and almost without knowing it, they will subject everything to special optical or manual rhythms, and will impose a thousand technical tricks, distortions, or inventions upon their subject-matter. Hence their schools or personal styles—just the element in their work which the idle aesthetic critic abstracts and perhaps exalts into their sole virtue: for the aesthete is a sort of intellectual voluptuary who thinks that everything is made, or ought to be made, simply for his contemplative satisfaction. And the aesthetic soul in the artists themselves takes this view, especially in musicians and painters, whose work has no immediate practical function; to them the patronage of industry, religion, and custom, or the duty of following natural models, may come to seem a monstrous imposition. Like the mutinous sailors or the rebellious professors, they may proclaim the independence of the spiritual quality, the free imaginative element, in their works; this, they may say, makes the true professional link between them, the artistic essence of their art; and in its name they may well establish an aesthetic Soviet.

Why not? The chief difficulties which might beset a Soviet of sailors or teachers, or even of artistic craftsmen, are vain and harmless in the impalpable realms of intuition. In politics or industry impulses may conflict, and dangers may have to be faced from without, so that your Soviet would quickly come to grief if it did

not begin by resigning all power into the hands of a leader. As sight requires a lens to focus and redistribute the interfused rays of light, so government requires a governor in whose brain and heart all interests may be synthesized and all actions co-ordinated. But for intuition the only lens needed is that which nature creates in each living organism: the rest—academies, precepts, public opinion—is so much dead lumber. Aesthetic values are essentially individual and occasional, and the greatness of masterpieces remains purely nominal until intuition in somebody recognizes and confirms it. It is the pupil's hand and the observer's eye that puts some living form, each time fresh and original, into the old subjects and the old designs. Moreover, in these free activities, nobody seriously suffers even if the worst comes to the worst. Let a painter stop painting, or compose things that nobody cares for, and who will perceive his loss? The brotherhood of aesthetes is not one of blood or interest, but of pure affinity: the aesthetic Soviet can accordingly break up harmlessly at any moment, until perhaps each artist becomes an only brother to himself; and even within the commonwealth of his own works and moods there need be no forced unanimity. Each of his intuitions will be sufficiently justified if it consecrates the vital harmony of the moment that produced it.

But in this case, we might ask, why set up an aesthetic Soviet at all, and not be satisfied with a happy anarchy, here where anarchy is innocent? Fish, I would reply, swim in a pathless medium, yet they habitually swim in schools. The same thing happens to free and emancipated spirits—aesthetes, poets, and philosophers. Not that free spirits or fish love one another. Their occasional cold contacts, in chasing the same seasonable bait, are slimy, offish, and spiteful; yet an uncomprehended compulsion draws them about into common feeding-grounds and currents, as if the movement and example of some unintentional leader were a signal requisite to give them direction and to awaken the darting impulse in their dark bosoms. Such is the helplessly gregarious nature of man even in his spiritual visions and most private flights. The truth and beauty which we profess to love would leave us profoundly disconsolate, if we could not dance before them holding hands and assuring ourselves, by saying so in chorus, that this beauty is really beautiful and this truth really true.

In thus faltering and seeming to renounce its integrity, spirit confesses and discovers its origin. For it is absolute and free only transcendently, that is, from its own point of view, when in the act of living it takes its existence and impulses for granted, and from that watch-tower surveys and judges all things as if from their absolute centre, or even thinks them a passive picture created by its own ingenious evolving thought. But all this, considered soberly and biographically, is so much egotistic illusion. In reality, spirit is never absolute or free; down to its inmost depths it expresses the life of some material organism, formed and buffeted by circumstances. Beauty—as the pure aesthetes have discovered—is not intrinsic to any form: it comes to bathe that form, and to shine forth from it, only by virtue of a secret attraction, agitation, wonder, and joy which that stimulus happens to cause—not always but on occasion—in our animal hearts. Even truth would be an unmeaning word and a nightmare to the spirit—as in fact it becomes in transcendental philosophy—if no threatening and mothering nature existed outside: intuition might grow more or less vivid, its field might seem more or less complex and organized, but no actual view could ever suspect the existence of any other view, or appeal to it. A construction in colours does not contradict or verify a construction in sounds; nor would a tragedy contradict a comedy, or another tragedy, nor would any part of discourse correct any other part of it, unless these various essences were understood to describe the same series of events, stumblingly enacted or brutally endured by living animals, and not in the least created by the intuition which may eventually review them in perspective. Pure spirit is not social: the pressing occasions for conflict or co-operation must first be impressed upon it from without or from below. Spiritual unanimity would be utterly inexplicable, as it would be perfectly idle and undiscoverable, if spirits were free and absolute, invisibly fluttering through heavenly spaces.

These considerations are not so speculative as they sound: they touch the fate of any Soviet. A Soviet requires that the spontaneous impulses of its members should be specific and that they should be unanimous. But how did these impulses ever come to be unanimous or to be specific? Evidently by force of animal necessity and of natural circumstances. Before children can conspire in

inventing and in playing a game, they must have been born contemporary brats; they must have had neighbourly parents and a common playground. Before sailors or teachers can form a Soviet, there must have been a ship or a college to bring them together, to give them a common task, and to turn them into comrades. A common competence or a common hatred or hope is first bred by the very institutions on which it reacts, and cannot long survive them. All nature is one great institution, of which animal bodies and human customs are in their day constituent parts: the freest spirit alive is a cub in that litter. Institutions do not originate in the sentiments which they produce; these sentiments, whether pious, aesthetic, or rebellious, always presuppose these very institutions. There may have been passions and plans in the minds of the founders too, or of the bystanders who insensibly, by their actions and interactions, allowed these institutions to arise; but such original sentiments, if not irrelevant to the result, would be those natural to sporting leaders, adventurous and imperious, who amid the surprise or opposition of the lazy majority constructed some novel engine, like a college or a ship, which they foresaw might hold together, and might acquire social uses; for any mechanism, if it can take root, will compel all adjacent mechanisms to adjust themselves to it. The ship and the college, if launched at the right moment, will attract vagrant souls, and turn them into sailors and students; and these novel employments will generate the moral bonds, the comradeship or the grievances, on which a Soviet may be based. The possibility of friendship among men hangs on such accidental heritages and contacts, on the fact of possessing common instruments and functions. These the Soviet inherits gratis, but they are its very life. Merchandise and travellers must continue to flow to the ship, parents must continue to send their sons to the college, if the fervent brotherhood of colleagues or mariners is to endure. No Soviet of professors could stand the strain of lecturing only to one another, or each to himself; nor could the ship go on sailing, wafted by a puff of socialism, simply to keep the sailors sailors, and spiritually one. How many of us have wished that there might be a monastery for free-thinkers! But the thing is impossible. A religious Soviet presupposes a fixed dogma, a common moral burden, an epidemic inspiration.

Aesthetic intuition and aesthetic invention are in the same parlous case. It is not enough that some image should arise possessing for the moment an inevitable interest and expressiveness, such as spontaneous ideas borrow from the effort of attention which fixes their floating form, if the image has no other significance, it will fade rapidly or will soon come to seem trivial and ugly, like those verses which a poet composes with rapture in a sort of dream, and which the next day, when he rereads them, he puts in the fire. A workman can hardly be true to a merely aesthetic fancy; it melts into something different; often it has sickened him before his apprentices have had time to adopt it. Hence an extreme instability in the purely aesthetic by-play of the arts. Spontaneous preferences are seldom so deeply rooted in sense or instinct as to be unalterable; fashion easily reverses them, and even while they prevail they commonly borrow their specious rightness from underlying moral compulsions. After all, on what can imagination feed save on such objects as happen to meet the senses, on the example of other artists, or on the public enthusiasms of the hour? Personal tricks of intuition will come to modify these themes, harmonizing them with one another and with the temperament of the artist; but pure taste is not creative, it contains no principle of initial choice, no radical motifs. Were the artist a free and absolute aesthete, equally solicited by the plethora of all possible forms, whither should his poor wits turn? I am afraid he would be condemned to eternal impotence, and would die like Buridan's ass without being able to choose among those equidistant allurements. But nature luckily breaks the spell, accident has loaded the dice; and if a man may abstract in his conceptions from the natural objects about him, he cannot abstract from the human nature within himself. He is animal before he is spiritual, imitative before he is inventive, and in his very inventions he merely turns over and ruminates the pabulum which fortune has thrust upon him. And as nature supplies his initial notions, so she also steadies his hand, and lends depth to his final allegiances. Certainly every aesthetic fashion has its intrinsic charm, felt when some wayward impulse conceives that particular effect, and prefers it. But why that effect rather than another? For some humble non-aesthetic reason: familiarity, facility, contrast, affinity, chance. The spark

of spirit requires the contact of material forces not only to kindle it but to give it direction, and fashions become styles only when they are anchored in necessity.

What, for instance, could be more intensely and exclusively aesthetic than stained glass? Yet the art of making it did not arise until non-aesthetic motives were found for it in civil life. It was akin to the boasts of heraldry. People had a passion for emblazonings, memorials, perpetual illustrations of sacred history, festive, dramatic, omnimodal expressions of worship. But soon, when learning became classical, chivalry reticent, and religion puritan, it was in vain for stained glass to retain all its splendour: this very splendour became odious or contemptible; it corrupted the light; it confused the eye; it seemed garish and barbaric, like peasants' finery. Glaziers were reduced to imitating the effects of paintings on canvas: for their own incomparable art they lost all skill, respect, or enthusiasm.

The truth is that the aesthete is essentially an amateur, a poetic spirit listening rather than composing. But in the modern world, where nobody knows where he belongs, it has occurred to him to pose as an artist. In this pretension he shows some democratic shyness. He would blush to confess himself a mere aesthete, coming to be ministered to and not to minister; he wishes to prove that he has a public function, and to justify his existence by doing some work, no matter how bad or unnecessary. At the same time, in this very pretension, he shows some democratic conceit; for he assumes that he is innately competent to do anything that he may fancy, and to do it much better than the poor slaves of training and routine. This is improbable: and in fact the most interesting work done by the aesthetic Soviet is that of old regimental artists who have passed to the revolutionary camp, and who can laugh at their own experiments and revert from them, on occasion, to traditional ways.

Such reversion is no recantation. Pure creation, absolute music, has always been the aesthetic essence of the arts: the more completely intuition can transmute and etherealize its materials, the greater its spiritual force. But this creation cannot be creation out of nothing; and here, I think, is the canker in the rose of the aesthetic Soviet, the reason why it seems sometimes to have lost the

modesty and grace of the garden, and to have become a monstrous orchid, forced in a greenhouse only to be displayed in a conservatory. Intuition is an animal function; its life comes of employing and if possible unifying the natural movements of the soul and summing them up in some luminous image. The image may be as sublimated as you will, it must not be irrelevant; the supreme is simple but not arbitrary. In proportion as the interests of the soul are not engaged, the soul will ignore that image, and the image will wither; the art which embodies it will have but a slender and unsavoury present, and no future. The prophets of the aesthetic Soviet announce that art must be emancipated from nature, and appreciation of art from literature. This is possible (though by no means exclusively right) if by literature we understand romantic history or fiction, and by nature visual appearances; but there is a mother-nature deeply hidden from the eye, and there is a moral world of which literature is the verbal expression; and from these no human art can be emancipated. All values are natural in their origin, and they all become moral in their harmony. A very casual and volatile pleasure may touch the moral world only by its innocence, in that it gives vent to some passing impulse, as laughter does, without doing any harm; but only the most superficial aesthetic effects can be put under that category. An adult work of art, since it has some material permanence, touches other moments beyond that in which it was begotten: it appeals to a moral constituency. If it is to be permanently esteemed it must continue to enrich the sympathetic observer with some emotion which exalts him, or with some perception which he is glad to renew. Otherwise the work abdicates that aesthetic quality which was its original essence, and says nothing to intuition. In its survival, it becomes a moral nonentity—as indeed all works of art become with time, when the spirit that informed them is obsolete. A monument without aesthetic fecundity encumbers the earth like the stick of a rocket, after its momentary flare has been lost in the intense inane.

We must expect the arts to remain in the hands of traditional artists; but these artists will lose nothing by occasionally joining an aesthetic Soviet for a sort of holiday or carnival. They will return to their workshops greatly refreshed; for after all the irresponsible aesthetes are the children of light. They have dis-

covered afresh how mighty is any technical medium, and how varied are the methods of pure composition: none compulsory and none illegitimate, if only they minister to the life which intuition draws from nature, but enjoys for its own sake.

PHOENIX

BY ROBERT HILLYER

The skirts of the careless wind have thrown
The sand in patterns of herring-bone.
Up from the ocean to the skies
Egyptward the phoenix flies.
Is it far away, bird of flame,
Is it far away, eyes of stone?
You'll lose your sight, you'll lose your name
Before the homeward journey is done.
Will you and the sun sail alone,
Bird of flame and boat of the sun?
Your eyes will fall to the yellow beach
And the tide will bear them out of reach;
The green tide will look at the sky
Through the fiery glaze of a phoenix eye.
Will the shrines of Egypt still be kind
When the wings are salty, the eyes blind?
What is sight to the dazzling sun
Who puts the stars out one by one?

And who is the young man that would dare
Fling his questions up the air
To the lord of fire who cruises there!

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DAY. BY LOWELL HOUSER





NIGHT. BY LOWELL HOUSER

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PERSEPHONE

BY MERIDEL LE SUEUR

WE boarded the train at a Kansas town. Its black houses sat low amidst the fields which were hardening and darkening now the summer was over. The corn had been shocked, the seed lay in the granaries, the earth had closed, and now the sun hung naked in the sky. All was over—the festival, the flowering, the harvesting. Dark days had come and I was taking the daughter of Freda away to discover, if I could, the malady which made her suffer.

As the train moved from the station I watched Freda standing on the platform, her round face shadowed by the train as it passed between her and the low sun. The daughter leaned against the window for the last sight of her mother; as we left the town she sat with her small head bent as if half broken from her body.

We sped through the dying country, fleeing through the low land. Upon the fields as they lay upturned and dark, clear to the round swinging sky-line, there fell the eerie wan light of the dying season. The train as it travelled through this dim sea of light became uncanny and frail, touched, too, with the bright delicacy of decay. But upon the daughter of Freda the last light dwelt intimately as she lay half sleeping, like the fields, fatally within the cycle of the dying earth.

Fatigued after the preparations for the journey, she rested in utter weariness. Her black garments hung, about to exhaust her, while out from them, like sudden flowers sprang her hands and face. Over her great eyes the lids were lowered and gave to her whole being a magical abstraction, as if she looked eternally within, or down through the earth. Only her mouth had tasted of violent fruit; it drooped in her face and turned red when she coughed, which she did frequently, dipping her head like a blind bird.

As I watched her an old pain brewed within me; a faint nostalgia which had come upon me all my life when looking upon her, or when in the presence of her mother, as if upon seeing these two women a kind of budding came about on all the secret unflowered

tendrils of my being, to blossom and break in the spaces of a strange world, far from my eyes and hands.

Just when the round and naked sun hung on the horizon, three bulls, standing in the dim, nether light, turned and loped towards our train.

"The black bull," I said, "looked like your husband's."

She lifted the white lids from her eyes, but did not speak. When I repeated what I said, she turned away without answering and sat with her hands in her lap, her eyes lowered, in an attitude so fatal and hopeless that I knew it was of no use to take her on this train, through these fields, past these rivers and houses to our destination. Nothing lay in these things that could mitigate her illness. The malady was too deep.

As we sped through the fields, the fantastic conquering of distance threw a magic over us so that terrible and vast things became possible. With the dying of the sun the train travelled through a colossal cave, between the closed earth and the closed sky and I half forgot our departure and our destination.

I have always expected some metamorphosis to take place in Freda and her daughter—a moment when the distant look would, by miracle, go from their eyes and they would reveal their nativity in some awful gesture. Nothing had ever happened beyond the natural ritual of our common farm life. But there came upon me now the old mystic credulity as I watched Freda's daughter sitting motionless, her white lids rounding over her eyes, her face glowing in the gloom.

Lying there she contained like a white seed, the mystery of her origin. The marks of living were slight upon her, for from the first she seemed to carry most strongly the mark of a perpetual death. Paradoxically I thought that because death was her intimate, I could never come nearer her mystery than to her birth on the prairies, in the spring as the first white violets bloomed.

For the women of the Kansas town, shading their eyes, had seen Freda coming from the prairies, walking and carrying the child.

"Whose baby is that?" the women asked her when she had come to them.

And she answered, "Mine." And uncovered for them to see, bending down to them.

"When was it born?" these women to whom birth was a great dread, asked.

She answered smiling, "In the night." And she went into a store and bought some goods with little flowers marked on it in which she wrapped the baby.

That year the days were bright and the earth bountiful. For each ear of corn heretofore, there were now two. The sun ripened all that had been sown. The soil was so hot we could not suffer our bare feet upon it. Freda's lands were the most fertile of all.

Her husband, Frantz, the strongest man in the country, was a ploughman. We saw him in the fields, dark and stocky, driving his big flanked horses, astride the black furrows that turned behind him. When he came to our fields we were frightened by his narrow eyes buried in the flesh, and by his hands matted with hair.

Together, Frantz and Freda ploughed the fields; there was a feeling abroad that never had Freda sown a seed that had not come to fruition. It was true that for her everything blossomed.

In the spring we met her in the fields or in the thickets, where the first flowers were springing alone. In the full, golden light she came towards us, full-bosomed, with baskets of wild berries hanging on her bright arms. When we ran to her, she gave us gifts, berries, nuts, and wild fruits unknown to us.

At harvest time she worked in the fields with the men. When we brought her water she straightened from the earth to loom above us, curving against the sky; a strong odour would come from her, like the odour of the earth when it is just turned; her yellow hair would glisten round her face and we thought it grew from her head exactly as the wheat grew from the earth. Once when she leaned over me, I grew faint with the fertile odour and at the same time drops of perspiration fell from her temples on my face.

When her mare was seen hitched outside the houses of the town, we knew that a great, natural, and dreadful thing was taking place within. The house became, after that, marked, possessing a strange significance of birth. We children, while the mare waited, sat on the curb watching for Freda, who, when she came, passed in a kind of confusion of her great body, the golden hair, and the strong, sweet odour. We would watch the hips of the horse, with Freda upon her, disappearing down the road, past the houses of the town, out into the open plains.

The child of Freda, delicate and pale from the first, was not much known or seen about. She came to town on the first spring

days, with her mother, riding in the wagon, atop the early vegetables. She carried with her always, falling from her hands, the first white violets. It did not astonish us that she was thus privy to the first stirrings of the season, since we glimpsed her through all the year in the prairies, by the streams, or hidden in the nooks of the fragrant hills. In the fall, returning from berry hunting, she brushed past us in the chill dusk. In the winter, as we went to the frozen creek, we glimpsed her peering from the naked bush. In the spring we saw her come by her mother, with the first violets. She never spoke to us, but covered her enormous eyes with her lids, standing quite still, before us but irrevocably hidden.

On Saturdays as Freda went about the town she hid behind her skirts, her eyes lowered in her slim, pale face. Some women would stop in the streets and say she was idiotic because of her little head. To me, however, she had a strange grace, with her swelling body, her little head and pale face, her eyes like minerals, and her hair light like her mother's, but fine and thin as if it had grown outside the light of the sun.

When Freda and her husband were ploughing the fields, the girl, who grew very tall, would run in the wake of the plough, singing. Frantz hated her, as everyone knew, and he hated her singing. When Freda, with her horses went plunging through the black waves to the horizon, he would leave his plough and strike at the girl. She would veer away as if only the wind had struck her, still singing.

When I could run away from the town I used to lie in the damp thicket which bordered their field and watch them; the dark man straddling the furrows, following the rumps of his horses, holding the plough to the heavy soil; Freda with her skirts on the earth, the horses turning their great eyes to look back at her, the fields lying about her with their living secrets—I watched with satisfaction these two heavy figures, turning the vast earth, moving upon her stillnesses, and the slim girl, like an antelope, running in the fields beside them, singing high and shrill.

She coughed beside me, dipping her little head like a bird. Now no song was in her.

Outside rapidly past us moved the thickets, the fields, the villages. A woman stood in a doorway, half invisible in the dusk,

hoisting a baby on her hip—a man came down the road with his team, the white breath of the horses flying from them in the dusk.

The visible world was sinking into another sea, into a faint dusk. The daughter of Freda lay like a fallen and despoiled angel, travelling through darkness, lost to the realm of her nativity, with neither memory nor anticipation. Still I watched her trying to spin around her the stuff of reality. Did there exist for her the seed of our common life or had she eaten only the fruit of perpetual strangeness and death? All that had happened to her, all the incidents of her life, I brought to bear upon her, but I had easier made a mark upon the wind. These things had made no mark upon her. The only mark was her mark upon life, upon all of us who saw her as a frail lost child in the fields of her mother, as a woman ravished by strangeness.

The young farm boys, still delicate with the wind and the fire which is the mark of light and air before the fields harden them, were the only ones who came close to Freda's daughter. They often told us in the evenings that they had met her in the thickets or coming across the fields, and had talked with her. But then they would say no more.

The older youths found it impossible to snare the footsteps of the delicate girl. Strange to say, on the other hand, the firm and serious farm youth were convinced of her wantonness, while old ladies rocking on their porches hinted dark things of her.

But one night a man came to town, from the west, driving his cattle, packed and bellowing through the deserted streets.

The next morning people said to each other, "Did you hear the cattle going by in the night?" We children thought it had been only a dream until, early in the morning, we saw on the lawn, the deep prints of cloven hoofs. When I went for the morning milk, just outside the town, I saw the cattle where they stood sleeping, knee deep in the grass and mist. As I was passing a man sat up, from where he too had been sleeping, and looked at me from the grasses. His beard stood out like bracken. From his low forehead the black hair sprang. When I saw him about to rise, I ran into the town shouting to my brothers that the cattle they had heard and thought were only the sound in a dream, had really gone down our streets, and had stopped on the outskirts of the town.

It came to be known that the man I had seen in the grasses went by the name of March. Saturday he came into the town riding a splendid horse. He went about the streets talking in a loud voice to the country people. He was to be seen too, at the horse barns, or at public auctions. Saturday nights he herded what cattle he had purchased, sometimes only a fine bull, to the pasture he had bought next to Freda's land. He became famous through the countryside for his pedigreed bulls. The farmers came in season to lead them to their own pastures for breeding.

It happened in a very subtle way that the countryside came to think of Freda and her daughter and the man March, all three together, as somehow of the same blood. All the vital acts of farm life came to move around one or the other of them. Freda and her husband seemed intimate with the fields, and the half mystical rites of planting and reaping. It was said in wonder that Freda even brought in the lambs as they were dropped in the fields in the spring as if she knew their time. She appeared to the women at the oven and her appearance augured good bread. It was out their road the farmers went for the breeding of their cows. The very lay of the land with its rich dark colour was strange, so was the magic they had with the earth and with natural things. Freda's daughter held a more strange mystery. She seemed half evil at times. But after she saved the life of a boy, when his body had turned black, they sought her out for palliatives.

So that it came about that the country people as they dreamed over their work in the spring and autumn, were half unconsciously touched by the mystery of their tasks—a mystery between their own action and the secret of what they acted upon, by virtue of which alliance everything they did prospered and yielded in the field, the vine, the flesh. Probably because they were, in a manner of speaking, without a God, when in their dream, in a kind of blind ecstasy over the earth, within the heat, they attributed dimly to the figure of Freda, and with her the other two, an alliance and an intimacy with the virtue and the mystery, along with something sinister, of the natural things of which their lives were made.

After the corn had been husked and the dreary Kansas cold had set in, I was wandering in the thicket which ran along the stream in a little curve of the fields below Freda's. The pale sun, casting no shadow, shone on the naked sod and the land, low and flat, swelled

a little to the sky. This side of Freda's, the bulls stood in the wind, quite still.

I had just left the path and gone further into the thickets for berries, when, out of the dying woods, with only a slight sound like a bird's, ran the daughter of Freda. March came after her. I could hear his feet strike the bare ground, and saw as he ran past me, his black beard and hair struck by the wind as he ran into the open. She had climbed the barbed fence and was running in the bull pasture, through the crisp grasses toward her mother's. But three bulls turned at the farthest fence and eyed her. When she turned back, frightened, March was running to her. Then she stood binding her skirts around her, her small head, like a dying bird's, thrown back. As she seemed about to cry out, he came upon her and bore her with him into the grasses. A young bull struck the ground with his forefeet and loped toward the sun. I ran back into the thicket.

The next days I was filled with terror because of what I had seen. I dared not go upon the road to the fields, or even out under the sky. The third day I came home and there in the dusk was Freda, leaning in our door.

"She is gone," I heard her say.

My mother spoke from the dark kitchen, "And is he gone too, with all the cattle?"

"Yes," said Freda and stood suffering in the dusk. After a while she walked away down the dim road.

Frantz came in the night, knocking and pounding at our door to know where she had gone.

That winter she grew very old. The farmers, through the frosty moonlight, saw her wandering the barren plains. Children screamed when she approached the town. She seemed like an old woman whose time of fertility has gone. In the nights she came knocking at the doors of the village to ask for her daughter.

That year the spring never came. The flowers died beneath the ground and the fields burned in the sun.

Through the hot days of spring we saw her far off, unreal in the simmering heat. We found her by the old well in our orchard, sitting, sorrowing on the stones, her hair wild and white. We were young girls from school with bright ribbons in our hair. We had come to cool our faces over the black opening of the well and to

cry down its sides to hear the sweet, far echo answer us. But when we saw her there we drew together, whispering and peering at her. She rose and came toward us, no longer bright and bold, but still terrible, looming above us. She went among us as we hid our faces in our aprons, stroking our hair and arms, calling each of us by the same name. It was a name I had never heard before and I could never, after that, remember it. She peered at each of us so close that we trembled when her breath came upon us. When she turned her sad eyes to the well again we ran from her in every direction, through the orchard, and for the rest of the afternoon watched her from behind the trees as she sat on the stones of the well, sorrowing.

One evening late in summer, as the land still lay beneath the drought, my brother came from the fields, and standing before us with the heat of the day on his face he said, "I saw Freda's daughter walking towards her mother's."

That night the country people thought it strange that the first rains fell, plunging ceaselessly into the earth.

The train stopped at a siding amidst the prairies in a sudden silence. The woman, aroused, sat up with her eyes wide open.

"How far are we?" she asked in a light voice.

I answered her very low, "From where?"

Before she could answer a fit of coughing shook her and the train started again.

The lights were lit. She was timid about going into the diner, but at last, with vague gestures, lifting her pale hands she put over her head an old velvet hat and rose and went down the aisle, forlorn and pale, with a kind of assaulted and pathetic dignity.

I came behind her, looking at the tall body as it moved with its peculiar grace. It was like this she had come back to Freda's, with this delicate, hopeless grace, as if she had touched strange fruits and eaten pale and deathless seeds.

After the summer, March had come back, driving his bulls through the street to the old pasture. He had knocked at Freda's door and Freda had given her daughter back to him. She had gone to live in his low hut. When we passed we saw her come out of the door to throw the dishwater over the bare ground. Her thick black skirts, given her now by the women of the town, would be pulling

and dragging about her, her little head would swirl up from them, free as a serpent's. After she had thrown the water she would stand still, tall and hopeless, in that terrible abstraction, looking toward us with her blind, deep eyes.

In the diner she seated herself with timid, quick movements, then sat with her eyes lowered. Some arrangement of the heavy skirt annoyed her, she fingered it delicately beneath the table. She coughed, turning her head and frowning. In an effort to suppress it the tears started, and did not fall, but hung there magnifying her great eyes. Suddenly, unable to bear the light, she closed them. Again as the lids covered her eyes, by some bewitchment her face became beautiful and eternal. I felt again the imminent metamorphosis as if she were about to change before my eyes and as always in haste as if to prevent a phenomenon which I both hoped for and dreaded, I spoke.

"Did you see the fine bulls that ran toward our train?"

She lifted her eyes and looked at me, but did not answer.

"I believe the black one was the one your husband sold the up-state farmer." She was looking at me. "Did you see the bulls just before dark?"

"No," she said and the answer startled me.

Whether it was the natural desolateness of travelling between places, likely to give to the form of what reality we know a vast and fabulous temper, or the sorrow of the dying year, I do not know, but back in the car, I became desolate and afraid.

For the remaining hours I sat opposite, watching her sleeping. I brooded over her, half expectant as if about to startle from the mist that covered her, the winged bird which was the secret of her being. I watched her with pain as she moved me with her ancient mystery, as of something half remembered.

It seemed to me again that a metamorphosis was about to take place here on this train, going through Kansas, that the bounds of all that I had known would be shattered before me. Lying before me, she lost what semblance of reality she ever had and seemed to glow and live in other elements than I knew.

What strange realms had thrust her forth to be born of her mother in the night, to put upon her the burden of endless movement through fields, upon the earth, through many days under the

burden of shadowless nights, marked with the mark of strangeness to be usurped by an unfamiliar man, to walk through unfamiliar places, and to carry unfamiliar burdens.

Watching her glow before me with her terrible veiled identity, a strangeness of everything came upon me and a terror. I felt suddenly that after this journey, in which after all nothing had happened, I should never be the same; that by looking upon her I was partaking of some poisonous drug, like the poison of early spring flowers and the poison of late berries.

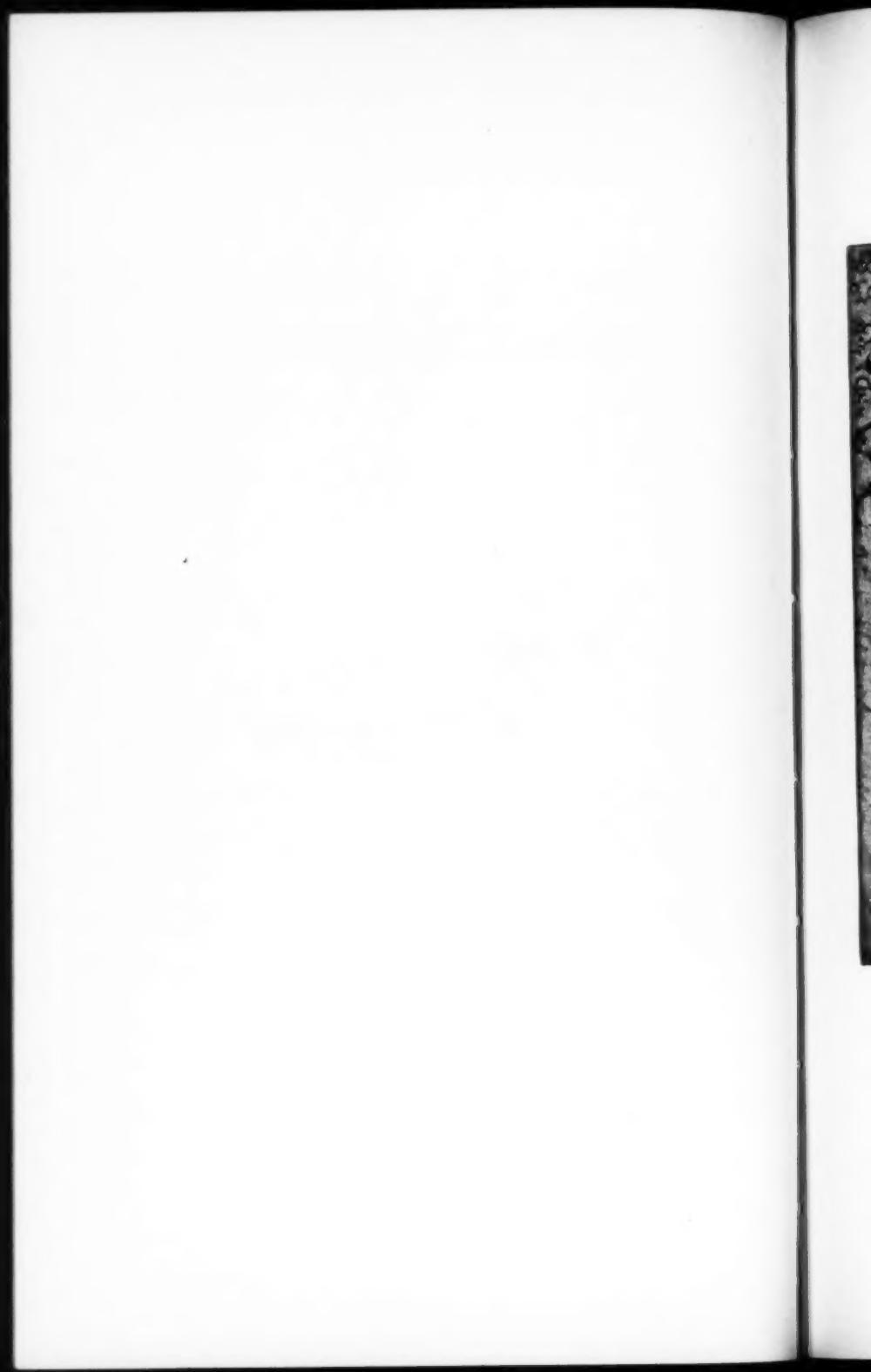
I dared not move in my terror, afraid she might stir, but she sat still, preoccupied, with her eyes hidden, dreaming of what she had never forgotten. Cautiously I came near to her mystery. She among us all had known that living was a kind of dying. When in these realms, she had refused to partake of our fruits and so become enamoured, but had closed herself in the dream which is real and from which we die when we are born.

Soon, now we would come upon the city glittering on the plain, above the bluffs of the river. A terror of all that lived came upon me; a terror of Freda's daughter who lay as if dead, glowing already in the mineral worlds of her strange lord. Because of the terror I said to myself, this woman is only the wife of a Kansas stockman—but who is the stockman? We saw him driving his bulls through the night, but who is he? Who is her mother? We saw her in the ripe fields, and turning the soil to fertility—but who is she?

All in that town came to me, all I had known passed before me, and I said, who are they? And I did not know.



DEER. BY L. H. JUNGNICKEL.





ON THE BEACH. BY L. H. JUNGNICKEL

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WILLIAM SHENSTONE

BY HAVELOCK ELLIS

SHENSTONE is ranked among the minor figures in literature, even in eighteenth-century English literature. Yet he has always been a significant figure for those who are able to see what signifies, and to-day his significance, not only for England but for Europe generally, continues to increase. In *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, where we may reasonably expect to find the standard literary opinion of our time, it is noteworthy that both Mr Saintsbury, who deals with the minor poets of the eighteenth century, and Canon Hutton, who deals with the minor prose writers, alike independently refer to the undue neglect of Shenstone; "a tendency at all times to treat him too lightly," says the former, who adds, also taking his prose into consideration, that we may put Shenstone after Collins and Gray for "the root of the matter"; while the latter states that Shenstone's prose has too long been neglected by lovers of good writing. As regards Shenstone's wider significance in the development of ideas in the modern world, that has been minutely studied of recent years by various writers in Germany and Switzerland and America, such as Dr Mathilde Müller, Miss Hazeltine, and Professor Hecht. This growth of interest in Shenstone is not merely due to that increased appreciation of the eighteenth century which marked the final disappearance of the nineteenth; it was already in progress in that century. For the interest of Shenstone is many-sided. While he was a child of his own age and carried certain of its lesser activities to the finest point, he was also the pioneer of a coming age; in various directions he felt and thought what people in general only began to feel and think some fifty years later. That leads us to his third and fundamental aspect: he was an original personality who had developed a temperament of his own. Such a man attracts the devotion of his friends, but usually the uncomprehending antipathy of those at a distance. It was so with Shenstone. He lived in the country, far from London. He cherished his friends, some of them men of con-

NOTE: A volume of Shenstone's prose writings, selected by Havelock Ellis and entitled *Men and Manners*, will shortly be issued by The Golden Cockerel Press. To this volume, Dr Ellis' article will form the introduction.

siderable distinction; the nearest and dearest was Richard Graves, perhaps the most notable of them all, and to him we owe much of our knowledge of Shenstone.¹

William Shenstone belonged to the middle of his century, being born in 1714 and dying in 1763, and to the central part of England at the point where Shropshire meets Worcestershire and Staffordshire. His family, it has been shown, was settled at Halesowen at least as far back as Queen Elizabeth's time, and his father was a plain country gentleman. Shenstone speaks of himself as having been born at the ancestral home, but nowadays we often know more about people than they knew about themselves, and it appears that he was born at Wigstone in Leicestershire, where, however, he was not baptized. This may indicate that he was born prematurely during a brief absence of his mother from home. That would be a significant fact as bearing on what seems to have been his constitutional tendency to ill health, notwithstanding a healthy country life; it is to be noted that the earliest dated poem he finally included in his work, dated 1730 at the age of sixteen (doubtless revised later) is an "Ode to Health" in which he mourns its flight, while several other poems are concerned with illness. Both his parents, moreover, died when he was quite young, while his younger and only brother died in early manhood, so that the heredity may not have been sound. His mother belonged to the Penns of Harborough near Hagley, an ancient family, and from her came the estate which brought her son some three hundred pounds a year. He was educated at a Birmingham school to which the gentry of the neighbourhood sent their sons, and then entered at Pembroke College, Oxford. This was the college of Johnson who later claimed Shenstone for Pembroke with satisfaction: "Sir, we are a nest of singing birds." Johnson and he do not seem to have associated, though they occasionally corresponded in later life, but it was here in 1732 that Shenstone learnt to know Richard Graves.² They were both

¹ I have elsewhere (*Nineteenth Century*, April, 1915) written of Graves and his *Spiritual Quixote*, one of the most interesting and amusing novels of the eighteenth century, lately reprinted for the first time after more than a century.

² In 1788 Graves published anonymously his *Recollections of Some Particulars in the Life of the Late William Shenstone*, the most interesting and intimate account of Shenstone we have, though not at every point completely accurate. Graves also wrote of Shenstone's home in the *Spiritual Quixote*, and another novel, *Columnella*, is supposed to be partly suggested by Shenstone's character.

occasionally to be found in a set which spent the evening in drinking ale and smoking tobacco, usually beginning these "pious orgies" with the catch:

"Let's be jovial, fill our glasses,
Madness 'tis for us to think
How the world is ruled by asses,
And the wisest swayed by chink."

But Shenstone was not altogether in his element in that set, nor indeed in the sets of a more sober and dreary character. He followed the regular courses with zeal and profit, and for the rest enjoyed the society of two or three special friends (mostly, like Graves, to prove friends for life) who would meet for breakfast to discuss literature and humour while they sipped Florence wine. On the whole he sought few friends, being bashful and always remaining rather unsociable. In his dress he was unconventional, hating wigs and wearing his own hair naturally, "almost in the graceful manner which has since prevailed," a pioneer in this as in more important matters. But he was a large and rather awkward person and his hair inclined to be coarse, so that in following the rule he had laid down that, without a slavish regard to fashion, "every one should dress in a manner most suitable to his own person and figure" (as his friend and publisher Dodsley puts it) he sometimes incurred a little ridicule at Oxford. He had been intended for the Church, but quickly renounced that project, and never joined any particular religious sect, just as he never associated himself with any political party; he was not hostile as regards these matters, but often humorous, and sometimes (when we look below the surface) rather critical. He left the University without taking a degree because on coming of age the family estate passed into his hands and he rather prematurely began to keep house, where what was regarded as his "indolent temper" induced him to linger—at that time reading much French literature—though he kept his name on the College books. At the age of twenty-two, when away on a visit, he fell in love, it would appear with the sister of his friend Richard Graves, a girl of great beauty, we are told, and "mild and serene graces." This passion held him for several years.

Meanwhile he gradually became absorbed in the cultivation of that combined rural and literary existence which was to make his

little estate, his *ferme ornée*, as he called it, The Leasowes, widely famous, and to occupy all his life. Fate was kind in enabling him to follow the vocation to which he was clearly called. It is true that he often complained of the idleness of his life, of his loneliness, of his lack of money and of health, of his melancholy, but it is certain that notwithstanding his indolence—of which he sometimes made a virtue—he found abundance alike of employment and happiness in his life, and constant delight in the development of his estate, even apart from the fame it ultimately brought him. In the absence of an early home life he had had no training in social intercourse; he despised formality and etiquette, he disliked dancing and card playing and the other social amusements of that age. He had no love at all for town life. He went on a first visit to London—one hundred miles in those days meant a three days' journey—when he was about twenty-six, and found much to interest and amuse him, but he never felt the least desire to settle there, and the question of going abroad never even seems to have arisen. At The Leasowes he carried out gradually a never-ending task of enlargement and improvement in accordance with those of his fertile ideas which his small income permitted, for, as he wrote to his friend Jago, "Economy, that invidious old matron, on occasion of every frivolous expense, makes such a hideous squalling that the murmur of a cascade is utterly lost to me." Still the cascade was no doubt eventually made with the help of his man Tom, while he could not always resist the temptation to buy what he called "toys," especially snuffboxes. He painted in water-colours (especially flower pieces) with some skill it is said, and was fond of music; he played the harpsichord, sang with much expression, and always regarded music, he said, as his "dernier resort." He was too considerate, as well as too lazy, to worry his tenants when in arrears with their rents, and he seems always on the point of plunging hopelessly into debt, yet for all his seeming carelessness he kept within his income of three hundred pounds, left no debts at his death, and so improved his little estate that (his friend Bishop Percy stated) it was sold by auction in 1795 for seventeen thousand pounds. Dr Müller compares the fame of The Leasowes to that of Abbotsford half a century later, but, while they may be comparable in reputation, in character they were totally unlike; Abbotsford was the monument of Scott's enthusias-

tic devotion to the past while *The Leasowes* attracted attention because it was so "modern" and seemed a revelation of the possibilities of the future.

Shenstone's complaints of the emptiness of his life, we can now see, were the outcome of his constitution; his "natural melancholy," like his indolence, was the mark of a native lack of energy, despite a large and seemingly robust frame. We can detect no definite chronic disease; he complains most of his digestion; it is unnecessary here to go into all the symptoms (the epitaphic *Inscription*, which is the most amusingly indecorous of the section of his verse entitled *Levities*, was probably written of himself) but it is evident that powdered rhubarb (with a little grated nutmeg) was not always an adequate treatment; nor even visits to Bath to take the waters, in which he had much faith. We hear of sleeplessness, headaches, little nervous symptoms; and it is evident that his house-keeper, Mrs Arnold—of whom we catch glimpses in the *Letters* and would gladly have more—sometimes had trying experiences, but his dependents, like his friends, clung to him, and their devotion bears witness to the consideration for others which those who knew him noted as marking all his relationships in life. "Tenderness, in every sense of the word, was his peculiar characteristic," wrote Dodsley, who thought he carried it to excess. "I cannot be half a friend," he said himself. Graves, who thought he was a little too fond of raillyery, notes how careful he was to stop when there was any risk of hurting.

With this disposition, and a horror of loneliness, he never married. To the modern literary critic the emotions of love he expressed in his verse seem an affectation. That is not so. His poems are, for the most part, as he said himself, "the exact transcripts of the situation of his own mind"; had he been a man of affectations he would scarcely remain of much interest to us to-day. We know from the statements of his close friend Graves that after the early attraction had faded out, at the age of twenty-nine, he met at Cheltenham and became intimate with a young lady of superior social rank to his own, who eventually outlived him; he was much enamoured, but he never seems to have made love to her. His emotions were sublimated in the *Pastoral Ballad*, which was long a favourite poem among youthful readers and remains one of his most admired productions. We may easily divine that, in his delibera-

tive way, Shenstone came to the conclusion that with his defective health and vigour, his love of informal ease, his inadequate income, he was hardly fitted for the arduous vocation of marriage. "It is a part of philosophy," he wrote of himself to a friend, "to adapt one's passions to one's way of life." But he always had a sensitive perception of the graces of women, and one notes, for instance, alike in his letters and his poems, how he appreciated a natural wearing of hair in his lady friends:

"So pleased I view thy shining hair,
In loose dishevelled ringlets flow."

When we come to Shenstone's relation to what is "natural," we are at the root of the question of his historical significance. To the literary critic of to-day, not burdened with much historic sense, Shenstone usually seems just a pseudo-classic eighteenth-century writer exploiting the conventions of his time, merely, in the words of one of his modern critics, "the best of English poets in the Dresden China kind." Similarly, as regards a yet more significant figure of the previous century, the mere literary critic is quick to see in Cowley his insipidities and his incongruities; he is blind to the new roads which Cowley opened, to liberate and enchant his contemporaries, simply because they are now so well trodden that the simple-minded critic takes them for granted. Thus it is that, when we look at Shenstone through the atmosphere created by the great Romantics, he seems lost in faded elegancies. To see what he means we must view him from the other side and we must know how he looked to his contemporaries. A rebel he certainly was not; he had neither the tough fibre of a Blake nor the sensitive reactions of a Shelley, which make the two types of rebel. He was too comprehensively humane and humorous for revolt, too temperamentally akin with the large harmonious spirit of Shaftesbury. But the same quality which led him to accept so much that was passing led him also to anticipate much that was coming. He was classic in fundamental taste. Yet even his favourite classic poet was the romantic Virgil, whose tender and melancholy music always haunted him, so that we often find it echoed in his own verse. "All the lines in Virgil," he wrote to Graves in 1755, "afford me that Sort of Pleasure which one receives from melancholy Music." The most favoured walk in

his grounds he had named Virgil's Grove, and here he set up urns to those whom he desired to honour, adorning them with the epigrammatic Latin inscriptions in which he was endlessly fertile; one of these (that to his beloved cousin, Miss Dolman) so good a judge as Landor termed "the most beautiful of epitaphs." But Shenstone, who had taken up the Faery Queen to parody it, found as he wrote *The Schoolmistress* that he was learning to love Spenser. It was, moreover, Shenstone, it seems, who first suggested to his friend Percy to edit and bring out those old ballads which were to be the inspiration of the coming romantic age. "'Tis the voice of Sentiment rather than the language of Reflexion; adapted peculiarly to strike the Passions which is the only Merit of Poetry that has obtained my regard of late," he wrote to Percy in 1760, towards the end of his life. Love verses without passion, he declared elsewhere, are nauseous conceits, and no poetry is worth while "that does not strongly affect one's passions." It is characteristic of Shenstone and those of his English fellows who were then feeling their way towards Romanticism, while still lingering among the classics, as Mathilde Müller remarks, that, unlike the early French and German Romantics, their movement was unconscious, and so it is that these first buds have so fresh a charm, and, as Saintsbury says, "a strange attraction." "I think most of my verses," he himself once wrote to Lady Luxborough, "smell of nothing but field flowers, and considering how I spend my time they can scarcely do otherwise." Thus it is that Shenstone, in the middle of his century, incarnates a transition. With one hand he touches Prior and beyond Prior points to the greater Spenser, and with the other he reaches towards Burns and even Wordsworth. We know what enthusiastic admiration Burns felt for Shenstone, especially for his elegies, his "divine elegies," and how in moments of depression he envied his genius. In Burns the buds of Shenstone become flowers. The echoes of Shenstone—magnified as echoes will be—appear in the ballads and elegiac lyrics of Wordsworth, though Wordsworth was moving with firmer and more adventurous feet in the new world to which Shenstone had uncertainly pointed.

The Leasowes was the physical embodiment of Shenstone's spiritual attitude of transition. When we read of the vistas he formed with such ingenious care, of the artificial waterfalls, of the inscribed urns to distinguished friends, such as James Thomson,

who had visited him, all this seems inconsistent in the man, so reverent of Nature, who wrote of the stream in the valley:

"Would art attempt, or fancy dream,
To regulate its winding way?"

But we have to remember that just as a modern critic (Saintsbury) has truly said that Shenstone's artificial pastoral was a stage in the return to real nature, so it was with his gardens. He was deliberately rejecting the formal geometrical gardens, with their fantastically carved trees, which his century had inherited from the seventeenth. He hated formality, in the garden as elsewhere, but in an age of artifice nature could only be introduced by cultivation, and what Shenstone did was to substitute for the imitation of art, which had so long ruled in gardening, an imitation of Nature, which in its turn gave place to the anyhow methods of gardening that prevail to-day. In this return to Nature he was working, however independently, in the same direction as the great professional landscape gardeners of the English school in his century, as William Kent and Launcelot Brown and Humphrey Repton. Years after his death The Leasowes still seemed to be laid out as finely as anything in the "modern" taste that had yet been done, and Isaac D'Israeli felt able to say that it was Shenstone who had educated the nation into "that taste for landscape gardening which has become the model for all Europe."

We are aided to realize Shenstone's position if we observe the attitude towards him of the two most typical men of his time, who, however unlike each other, yet together best represented the spirit of their age, Dr Johnson and Horace Walpole. They were neither of them actually hostile to Shenstone, yet both stood aloof and both failed to like him, as indeed they could not but also fail to like each other. ("Good-natured at bottom," said Walpole of Johnson, "but very ill-natured at top.") Although Johnson was favourably disposed to Shenstone as being of the same college, his references to him were of a grudging and slighting character, even ten years after his death. "A good layer out of land," he said (not that he thought much of that) but with no excellence as a poet, and he would not even agree with Boswell's appreciation of his prose. Boswell, whose perceptions were more sensitive, writes: "My illustrious friend, I thought, did not sufficiently admire Shenstone."

Johnson's one tribute was that when staying at the inn at Henley-in-Arden, where Shenstone had written the stanzas *At an Inn*, he repeated "with great emotion," the last verse:

"Who'er has travelled life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn";

but that appreciation was due to Johnson's own declared belief that "a tavern chair is the throne of human felicity." Moreover it was a little touch of boorishness that had brought Shenstone to that inn and led to the poem; he had gone to visit his old friend Whistler, in whose house he never felt quite at home, when a little tiff occurred between the friends, and Shenstone went off to the inn in a huff. But so colossal a boor as Johnson could not but feel contempt for Shenstone's little excursions in that field. Shenstone had much admiration for the nervous qualities of Johnson's prose at its best, but Johnson, for whom even Milton's mighty sonnets seemed petty, was necessarily blind alike to the delicacies and the simplicities of Shenstone's verse; for him Shenstone must have seemed to be absorbed in trivialities. That might have endeared him to Horace Walpole, the supreme master of the trivial; indeed on one occasion Walpole mentions how he had been eagerly reading Shenstone's Letters, "which though containing nothing but trifles amused me immensely." No doubt he had there noted the remark that Mr Walpole in his books "with great labour recorded matters of little importance, relative to people that were of less." But it is clear that there were not trifles enough in Shenstone to please Walpole entirely. Shenstone's Letters seldom touch on great events or great personages, but to-day they are full not only of trifles, but of human interest and personal character. To Walpole Shenstone doubtless seemed provincial. Walpole, with all his taste for the fashionable shudders of an antiquarian Gothicism, was not only a man of the world, but a man of the wider world, a cosmopolitan, at home in France, the intimate correspondent of Madame du Deffand, the chief English representative of what to many seems the spirit of the eighteenth century, though it was really only one aspect, however significant; for just as Croce finds that the thought of the nineteenth century has been realized in the twentieth, so, with more confidence,

we may say that the seeds of all the mighty growths of the nineteenth century were sown in the eighteenth. Shenstone was not a man of the world and not a cosmopolitan; although interested in France he was English, though not, like Johnson, insularly English, and he was content to be English; his chief woman friend and correspondent, Lady Luxborough (who, indeed, sometimes "indulged" Shenstone, he says, with a letter in French) was distinctly English. Yet he moved in a larger orbit than either the more brilliant Walpole or the more massive Johnson, if at times coming near to both, and they remained too close to their own age to follow his course.

Shenstone, not without his ambitions indeed, and often more lonely than he liked in the cheerless winters, was still certainly content to follow his own course at The Leasowes, even though, as he wrote to his friend Jago, "the notable incidents of my life amount to about as much as the tinsel of your little boy's hobby-horse." Here he wandered in his own groves—"Virgil's Grove" he often mentions—and along his own brooks. Here he fed his wild ducks and gathered his carnations, wrote down his reflections as they occurred to him, carefully indited his letters (he thought well of these and was sorry to hear that one series had been destroyed on the death of a friend) seldom failing to refer to the visits he is expecting from his friends or those he is planning to make. Much time was taken up by the constant little improvements made to the estate, and in between all were woven his poems. "I have an alcove," he wrote to Jago, "six elegies, a seat, two epitaphs (one upon myself), three ballads, four songs, and a serpentine river to show you when you come." The visits of friends were always a festival for the often depressed and ailing poet. They found him, as described by Graves, a man a little heavy in appearance (clumsy, some said) with a face that became very pleasing when animated, and hair that had early turned grey, simply dressed (very negligently, others said) usually a plain blue coat in summer and winter alike, and a scarlet waistcoat with broad gold lace. We gather that he did not always get on well with acquaintances who were not of his inner circle. Amos Green, a now obscure artist who was a neighbour of Shenstone's, sometimes stayed with him, and in the *Memoir* by his wife we are told that "his intercourse with Shenstone afforded him great pleasure: he said he was singularly agreeable when in spirits; but he was full of foibles and faults, and their friendship was not lasting." But, though Shenstone speaks kindly

of young Green, and thought highly of his work, we can scarcely admit a friendship. "Foibles," Shenstone confesses to his friends, but with all who were really near to him the friendship was life-long. With Lady Luxborough, Bolingbroke's half-sister, his correspondence was close (a volume of her letters to him has been published) and lasted till her death. They frequently stayed at each other's houses; on one occasion we hear of her coming to his house with five servants, and horses to match, which must have taxed her host's modest hospitality. Lady Luxborough's marital life had not been flawless, and General Knight, a natural son of Lord Luxborough, is reported to have said that his father left his wife on account of her too great partiality for Shenstone. She was no doubt a woman of independent spirit with tastes of her own, but we may probably accept the view that Lord Luxborough, who notoriously "roved from fair to fair," merely desired a pretext to leave his wife; she was fifteen years older than Shenstone, and her letters give not the least indication of more than ordinary friendship with much community of tastes; she doubtless felt the attraction to a man of genius sometimes experienced by great ladies of cultivated mind, an attitude of slightly patronizing worship. With the Lytteltons and other distinguished families in his neighbourhood Shenstone was in friendly relationship, while at the same time he was on good terms with his humbler neighbours. The Leasowes grounds seem to have been open to all, and on Sunday evenings he speaks of himself as sometimes moving among nearly a hundred and fifty people. He had set up two stanzas of verse in which he warned "swains and nymphs" of the penalties which the fauns and fairies of the place would inflict on those who injured shrubs or picked flowers, remarking that, with the strong local belief in fairies, he trusted this warning would be effectual. We have hardly improved upon it to-day.

On one occasion he went to London, again lodging in Fleet Street. He found that neighbourhood and the Strand infested with pick-pockets, who carried bludgeons with the object of first striking their victims to the ground, even as early as eight in the evening, and decided that he preferred the milder troubles at home. He never indeed cared to be away for more than a few days at a time. It was a severe blow to him when his only brother died in 1752, the greatest affliction that befell him (though we do not seem to hear of the brother when alive) and he writes to Graves at length and with

touching simplicity of his grief. It seemed to him that he despised poetry and hated his house. A few months later summer came and he was trying to forget his sorrow. He writes in July:

"I neither read nor write aught besides a few letters; and I give myself up entirely to scenes of dissipation, lounge at my lord Dudley's for near a week together; make dinners; accept of invitations, sit up till three o'clock in the morning with young sprightly married women, over white port and *vin de paysans*, ramble over my fields, issue out orders to my hay-makers; foretell rain and fair weather; enjoy the fragrance of hay, the cocks, and the wind-rows; admire that universal lawn which is produced by the scythe; sometimes inspect, and draw mouldings for my carpenters; sometimes paper my walls, and at other times my ceilings; do every social office that falls in my way, but never seek out for any."

But his gaiety was the mask of melancholy, and a touch of sadness comes at the end of this letter, as in many of the letters that follow. Yet to the end his letters, if not his life, were marked by his old vivacity and are full of his old interests, glancing off now and then to the literature of the day, Voltaire's latest play, Madame de Sévigné's Letters, Sir Charles Grandison, Burke on The Sublime and Beautiful, or the new Virgil from "neighbour Baskerville's press." In 1758 he went to Worcester to hear the Messiah—"it seems the best composer's best composition" though he had his criticisms—"but returned with double relish to the enjoyment of my farm." Meanwhile his reputation was growing among men of letters, and the fame of The Leasowes spreading far. His spirits always rose in the season of flowers, but in the winter months, especially January, he usually suffered from depression of health and spirits. It was in January that he was attacked by his final illness. He died in February, 1763, of a "putrid fever," a term which conveys no meaning to us but was then used not only for typhus, but for various acute inflammatory complaints.

It is an advantage for a minor author to come down to posterity encumbered with but little baggage. Shenstone bears only three small volumes—poems, prose, letters,—and they contain little that those who read them would desire to cast away. Herein Shenstone was well served by his constitutional indolence. He was too lazy to write except at such moments as he felt he had something to

say. Yet he was anything but lazy in the care he bestowed on what he had thus written. He was eager for criticisms and suggestions from his friends, he frequently rewrote, he was never tired of polishing. He rejected what he felt to be below his level, and took much trouble to suppress a little volume of poems he had published at the age of twenty-three. In the end, indeed, that has helped to limit the number of his readers, for the perfection of shape finally attained by his poems has hardly seemed of a degree to make up for the seeming lack of vivid original inspiration. In one of his later letters he defends this care in composition and argues that it should not obscure the mark of original inspiration. His arguments are sound. Yet it may be noted that *At an Inn*, which though but a trifle (he placed it among his *Levities*) has alone among his poems been styled "famous," owes that quality to a sharp original inspiration which has survived the polishing, while in too many of his poems we enjoy the polish, but find the inspiration vague. "One cannot deny," he himself admitted, "that there is a sort of person formed by nature for *shooting-flying*, which I could never do." At his best Shenstone is delicate or reflective, and with an echoing melancholy music, idyllic or elegiac:

"Where with Oenone thou hast worn the day;
Near fount or stream, in meditation rove;
If in the grove Oenone loved to stray,
The faithful Muse shall meet thee in the grove."

We need not doubt his original inspirations, but they are too often obscured by the classic convention in which he clothes them, and the music for which he had so fine an ear hardly suffices to make up for that obscurity. Collins and Gray are counted as in the same movement as Shenstone; but it was their good fortune to come a little later, and those traditions of art which to Shenstone could still seem natural they began severely to cast away (although we have to remember that Shenstone was one of the few modern poets whom Gray unreservedly admired) and so to come closer to the real facts and appear before us to-day in a poetic rank to which we can never lift Shenstone. Shenstone's *Schoolmistress*, in which, first begun in early life as almost a parody, he united his feeling for the fairy romance of Spenser with a naturalistic love for things of the earth, Gray called "masterly." Hazlitt, living in an age of great poetry,

had but a poor opinion of Shenstone, yet he calls *The School-mistress* "a perfect piece of writing," while to-day, Dr Harko de Maas, the historian of modern English romanticism, considers that poem "for humourous tenderness and pathetic burlesque not easy to match." But all the fine qualities of Shenstone in verse, it must be admitted, now make their chief appeal to the literary specialist, and he is likely to over-rate them. Gosse is reminded by the *Pastoral Ballad of Watteau*. That is excessive. Shenstone was never a magician to create a new enchanting world of fairyland. If we must have comparisons of this kind (they are really to be condemned) let us rather think of Lancret, who accepted the gracious traditions he had received, and developed them on a realistic earth with a skill which still appeals to those who can recognize it.

It is customary to regard Shenstone as a poet. But to-day it may be claimed that it is in his completely neglected prose that he is most generally interesting and most impressive. *Essays on Men and Manners*, the title which covers the whole of this prose, occupies the second volume of Shenstone's Works, published the year after his death. It consists of occasional essays, and many reflections jotted down as they occurred during the last twenty years of his life and arranged under headings according to subject. Dodsley, in introducing them, wrote:

"His character, as a man of clear judgment and deep penetration, will best appear from his prose works. It is there we must search for the acuteness of his understanding, and his profound knowledge of the human heart."

Essays on Men and Manners remained in the Works as long as they continued to be reprinted. Fifty years ago (in 1868) they were issued afresh in a series of miscellaneous books. But I have never been able to observe that they are ever read or quoted, or even referred to outside literary histories. There are perhaps at least two considerations which may help to account for this neglect. In the first place, of the two components of the volume, essays and fragments, it is the essays that are most conspicuous, but also the least notable. They are well and pleasantly written, like everything Shenstone wrote, sometimes of charming quality, though the phraseology may now and then seem antiquated; yet if to-day we smile at the adjective "elegant" and find "taste" too simple a name

for the aesthetic appreciation almost amounting to genius Shenstone had in mind, the substance of his writing is as much alive in our day as in his own. But Shenstone lived immediately after the great masters of the essay; it had been carried to perfection; at that moment there was no further progress to make; he could only do well what had already been done better. In the fragments Shenstone was alone in the field, and here he became really himself. But here also a supposed "unfinished" character diverted attention. It was not realized that they are not really unfinished. No one recognized that Shenstone was a *pensée*-writer, and that his prose corresponds in English to the work of the great French writers in that kind.

This was not clear to Shenstone's contemporaries. For them his prose was merely fragments. *Ex pede Herculem*, they said, and they thought of the wonderful things he would have done if he had not been so lazy. They failed to understand either his indolence or its outcome. "Did I never tell you (if not, I do so now)" he wrote to a friend in 1754, "that indolence will, in a thousand instances, give one all the advantages of philosophy and pray, if you call me lazy any more, take care that you do not use an expression by way of disparagement which I consider as the highest honour. I am a fool, however, for discovering my secret." Shenstone knew himself well enough to know that his "laziness" was the expression of that kind and degree of energy which had been bestowed upon him, and he was wise enough to accept it, and in so doing to transmute it into art and philosophy. His "secret" was that he knew how to use his limited strength, to spend it on what was worth while, and to produce, in the end, little, it may be, but only his best.

That is a kind of disposition, it must be noted, that accounts for the form of expression of the great *pensée*-writers generally. A writer of rich and vigorous temperament, a Goethe or a Bacon, may incidentally write *pensées*, they cannot be a chief outcome of his life. It is where there is only the energy for brief intellectual flights, the need for concentration, for hesitation, for deliberation, and the consequent demand for high finish, that the great writer of *pensées*, of maxims, and of reflections, is moulded. It may not be quite clear that the spiritual anaemia of La Rochefoucauld was the result of physical conditions and not of the unfortunate environment in which he moved, but we see clearly in Pascal the outcome of a morbid and suffering organism; we see it in the bitterness of Chamfort. I would especially like to invoke the instance of

Vauvenargues, in whom we find not only the same courage towards life combined with physical delicacy, but a sweetness and tolerance and insight which bring him of all the great writers with whom he is grouped the nearest to Shenstone. It is time to realize that while the figures of first rank in this kind belong to France, we have in Shenstone a writer altogether English who is worthy to place among them, if not on the same level as the highest, yet in the same class.

THE HERMIT

BY RALPH CHEEVER DUNNING

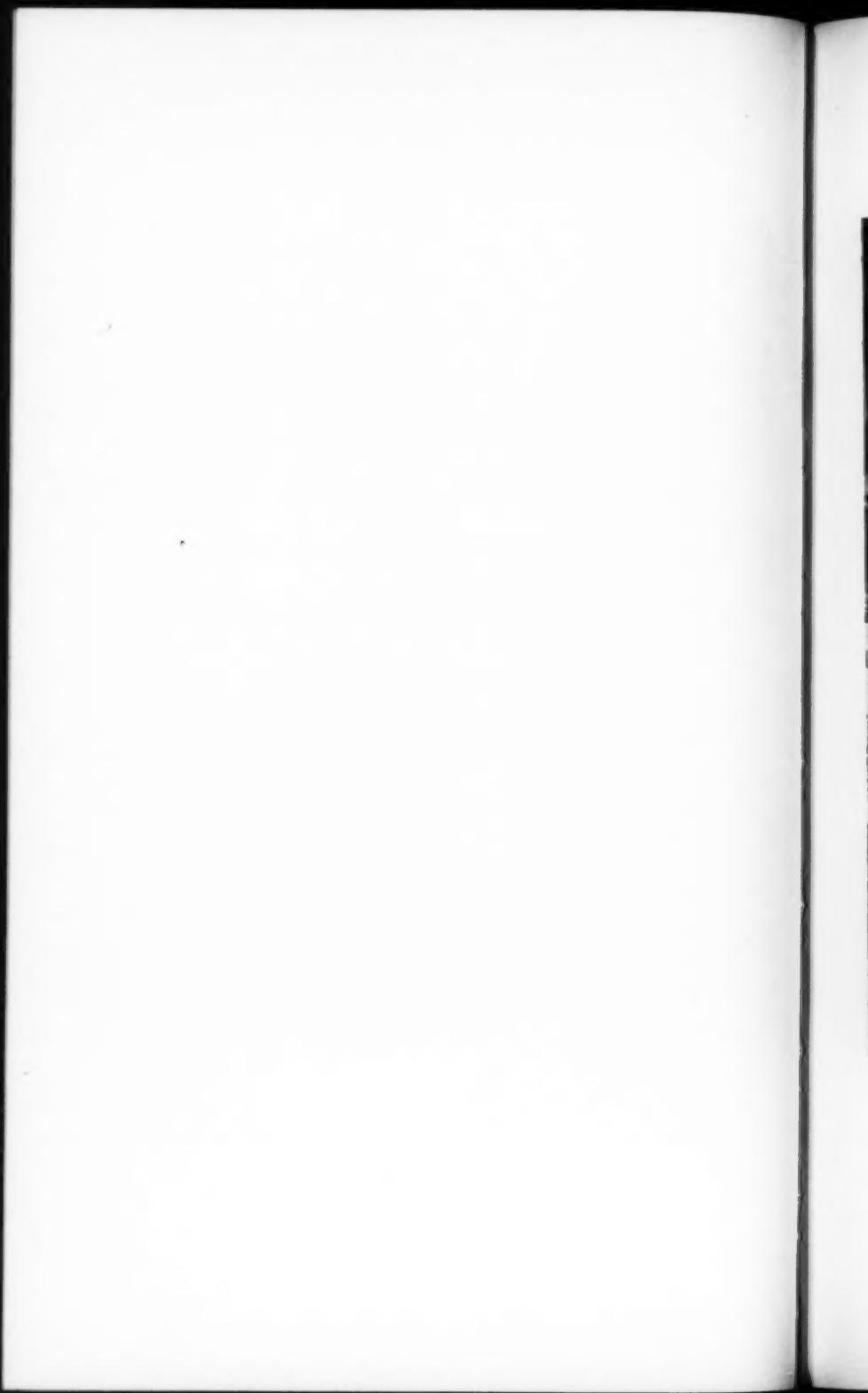
Bleed, O my heart, bleed slowly but take care
That no one hears thy bleeding. In the night
Let not thy bedfellow divine thy plight.
Bleed softly, O my heart, and in the glare
And heavy silence of high noon, beware
Of good Samaritans—walk to the right
Or hide thee by the roadside out of sight
Or greet them with the smile that villains wear.

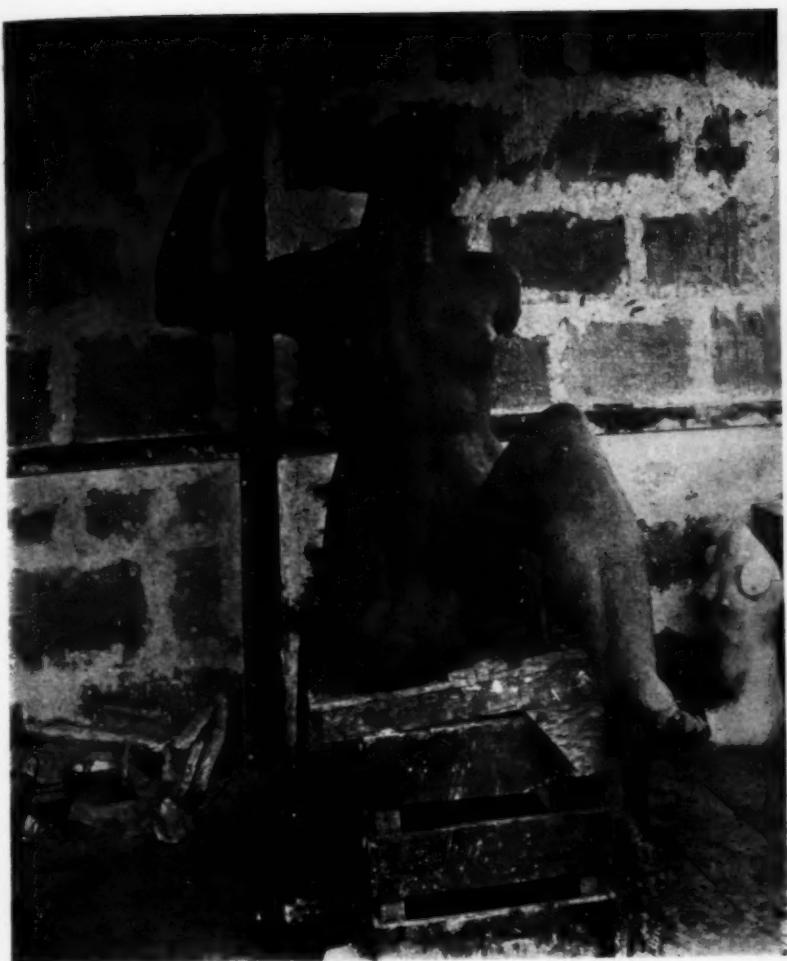
Bleed slowly and bleed softly, O my heart.
Go hide in nameless mountains of the north
Or deep in monstrous cities play thy part,
O bleeding heart whereby the world's aflood—
But shun all congregations loving blood
Lest some fool on a banner bear thee forth.



Photograph by Druct

FEMME DEBOUT. BY ARISTIDE MAILLOL.





Photograph by Druet

FEMME ASSISE. BY ARISTIDE MAILLOL

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MEMORIES

BY LEON SRABIAN HERALD

VI

STARS, FARMERS, CHILDREN

HOW dare a soldier in uniform whisper? There was no harm in it this time. It was Herald in an employment agency, whispering to the clerk who did not understand all that was being said to him—who did not hear Herald saying that he was a discharged soldier. But it was clear to him that the applicant wanted a job and he recommended him to a place on a farm, to which he went of his own free will.

In any city, town, or village in which he had lived, he had asked for work but had never mentioned wages and his eagerness to work on a farm now surpassed any thought of them.

"You want to work on a farm?" asked the farmer.

"Yes. The government is sending me to a farm to recuperate."

"Done farmin' before?" queried the huge farmer in the tone in which a city boss asks a country boy if he has worked with machines.

"I have in the Old Country," replied the ex-clerk, leaving space in the sentence.

"If you know somethin' 'bout farmin', all right. We're short this year and glad to git anybody. But there are lots of city men that ain't worth the feed they eat." And the plough changed hands.

The new farmhand thought ploughing would be easy, but he had hardly gone a horse's length in the field when the farmer thundered, "Hoa! you're ruinin' my field. I thought so!" The horses stopped for they understood better than the man—who explained that he had ploughed with oxes in the Old Country and that horses seemed different. With vituperation plus admonition, the farmer took the reins and like a diplomat who must treat enemies as friends, assumed the trying task of teaching. Verily with intention, like a diplomat, he remarked later at the table

in his wife's and daughters' presence, "Our friend don't know ploughin'. Losin' a deal, teachin' him."

Four o'clock in the morning. Twilight and mist retard the summer dawn. The farmhand walks a mile to bring the horses from the pasture. He is about to cross a ditch to put a halter on Jack whom the rest of a dozen horses and colts follow. Jack is easy to catch; he is eating apples—apples thick and luminous on the grass—whiter than a bridal bed. Suddenly from the luminous patch at Herald's feet, arises the loveliest striped creature, looking up at him peacefully. What is it? The hired man is unacquainted with such a thing, has never seen or heard of it. It is a dog? Maybe; maybe not. He had best be careful. This lovely animal, this cub in the luminous apple-bed, standing so near to him. It does not run away. It is not afraid of him. He calls it as he would a dog, but it does not respond as a dog would, or wag its tail. It is not yet light enough to see, and a childish fear, a prehistoric remnant of primitive emotion dominates his senses and he begins to strike the little creature with a twig which is in his hand. It leaps away a few paces from the fear-tainted ploughboy and—O primitive boy, do you not see that the little thing that was so close to you was not to be stricken? No, you see nothing now and in vain are seeking a handkerchief, your soldier's khaki handkerchief to restore your eyes. Would that you had no sense of smell. This punishment came from nowhere but the sky. You ought not to have hit the thing born on the luminous apple-bed—of twilight and of mist. Now you are seeking water, with prayer, to wash your eyes. You are not blinded. How happy not to have been! Never again hit an innocent animal. For was it not a pleasure like that foretold by Isaiah, to stand in peace with the lovely thing in stripes? Even a hunter could not have shot it if it had been so close to him. For half an hour you wash your eyes. Now you can see a little, thankful to have found a pool made by the night's rain. . . . For an hour you wash your burning eyes and face—a mile away from home, unable to call for help or an antidote. Now you can see; now the twilight has left the mist; the mist is now leaving, the sun is rising; the farmer, waiting. He knows what has happened and fails to come to your relief. He is angry. Hurry, ploughboy, hurry; the sun is rising!

He comes home without the horses and before he is even near the barn he hears laughter, heavy laughter—striding, cleaving the mist, and assaulting his ears. Herbert stands at the barn-door struggling to smother it—smudge-like. The farmer laughs out once, then asks his new man where the horses are, and again laughs like a land-slide.

"Do you notice this smell?" the simple boy asks of the full-fledged cynic. The farmer and his man again laugh uproariously.

"We smelt it half an hour ago!" says Herbert.

"Oh!" says Herald, "you know it then? What is it, Herbert? Tell me."

"Go home!" orders the farmer. "Herbert, fetch the horses. We can't waste the day on a green city chap," and he disappears in the barn.

"Tell me, Herbert, what is this smell? My eyes are itching—and—and—" he cannot finish because Herbert is bending like a poplar, in a wind of laughter-agitated words—trying to say, "A skunk done it!"

"A skunk?" says Herald.

"Skunk," says Herbert and goes after the horses.

The "Missis" called the puzzled boy and told him to take off his clothing and bury it in the ground and leave it there a week—that in no other way could he destroy that terrible odour. The two grown daughters sympathized with him, smiling. Little Carl sympathized, and Carl's dog—wagging his tail at a distance.

"What is this, what caused it?" he begged of the women, who smiled but told him nothing.

Long afterward, when he had buried his clothes, and was working with Herbert in the field, he came near to apprehending this subtle process of nature, this agonizing and at the same time wondrous means of self-protection. The book of knowledge was unfolding itself to him apocalyptically—without words. Pleasure was disguised in pain and he laughed to console himself for being laughed at.

By the end of the month the farmhand realized that his boss was a mercenary fellow, unloved by his wife and daughters, unliked by his neighbours, although president of the village bank. For a month's services the ex-soldier was paid fifteen dollars—whereas if he had bargained in the beginning he could have had

forty, and in the morning he handed the job back to its rightful owner.

"Y're late this mornin', Lee! The horses are waitin'. It's after five!"

"I am going to the city," answered ex-Leon, turning on his side.

"And now I've teached you somethin', you don't want to work! I'll give you twenty dollars next month. I'll be fair with you."

"Thank you. I am going to have twenty dollars' worth of sleep this morning."

After all the farmer with a German accent could not be very angry with a youth wearing a soldier's uniform in that time of the Great War, wearing it against Germany. And the soldier-ploughboy slept.

It was not really because of short wages that he wanted to leave the farm. This was a mere excuse. Sleep and food were two strong legs upon which imagination was lifted high for he could sleep and eat now, but were there not yet other needs to satisfy? On the farm, books and magazines were inaccessible. It was true that ever since he had come to America he had not had much money and at times none at all, but had he ever felt himself poor? Had he ever felt that he was anything but rich? He never had. And imagination lifted high and strong upon its two legs of good appetite and sound sleep, carried him to the city again. In the afternoon he went by whistling while the farmer ploughed—waving his hand, maybe at the horses, maybe at the trees, maybe at the farmer too.

Like a poor wage-earner who squanders money on pay-day, Herald, with a similar knowledge of health came to a job in the city, a job in a bookstore. An indoor occupation was to him as a café to the wage-earner. Again he felt himself spent, mis-spent. How quickly is money spent when one knows not the laws of wealth. Mere intuition was flinging him from wall to wall. He could not understand, could not explain; he could only obey.

Snow-flakes always evoke the human voice and human voices come forth expressing either joy or grief. That day snow-flakes were falling thick and large. Herald watched them from the book-

store almost waiting for—no, hearing—human voices. Of children sliding, skating in the parks? Or the voices of snowbound travellers lost on the way and calling for help? The snow-flakes were falling thick and large as if wanting to hear the whole city, the whole world cry out together. Already the world was crying, moaning, weeping. Its voice had almost given out in its long crying, the world had almost perished, crying for help. Or was the snow merely calling to him to come out of himself? But soon the city answered all that the snow enquired; the world answered. Herald heard the city. He heard the world. Voices rose. Flags waved. Horns and bands wakened. Confetti rose in all colours to join with the snow-flakes, and distinct was one word—Armistice! Armistice! **ARMISTICE!**

He fell on his knees between the two counters, weeping. But is it possible to weep in that fashion? Is it possible to shed tears in that fashion? Could there be in a human body, so many tears to shed! The women in the store gathered around him, the men came, lifting him, asking him the cause.

“So far—so far,” he managed to say as clearly as he could, “so far only have I heard what has happened and now that the way is open, I may see what has become of my people in my own country—and know if so much as one of them is alive. How good and how terrible it will be to have a surviving brother!” And the people understood—stood with him as the world participated in that demonstration of descending snow-flakes.

He lives at the top of the house. His room has two windows; one in the ceiling, one in the wall. The sides are small; the ceiling is smaller. The window in the wall is very courteous. It barely rests there. To accommodate the wall it has given it all the room. The window is a mere imitation of a window. And all windows are as if by courtesy kinsmen—alike. The one on the ceiling is a ventilator, as uncomfortable as the one in the wall. The ceiling and the walls need more room. The walls and the ceiling are like large immigrant women carrying heavy burdens. The two windows are like courteous children, one hung there by a strap as it were, and the other puffing between the two women.

“Herald,” says the landlady, “you did not go to work. Let me

see your tongue." Soon the doctor comes with a doctor's good intention and a doctor's helplessness. The patient must go to the doctor's office to be examined again. His sickness is given another name. What was it the doctor called it? At any rate it is something quite different from what the other doctors had discovered. And Dr Friedmann, who becomes Doctor "Free" because of the war, and will re-adopt his German name in the near future, puts on Herald's breast a powerful electric light. That is all the doctor can do—put on Herald's breast a powerful electric light, as if his sickness were darkness—an absence of light.

The landlady trusts him now. His sickness had brought them closer to each other. He is given permission to go into the kitchen or to the living-room, to sit with the family and play with the children—maybe sing with them a little and dance. "You have a nice voice," the landlady remarks approvingly, "you must allow our teacher to try it."

"Yes," agrees fourteen-year-old Felice, bringing in her teacher who has a room across the hall. The next day Herald goes forth as a singing student with brilliant hopes for the future.

"May I take Felice to the movie?" he asks one evening.

"Thank you, but she is too young to go out with young men."

"I don't mean—I mean little Jeanne too. I want to take them to a show." And he walks on the street with the children as if rugs were spread under his feet, a prince of happiness. The show is wonderful too; it is a wonderful thing to go to a show with children. He compares this evening with times when he has been alone.

To be concluded

CHILDREN OF ADAM

BY JOHN COWPER POWYS

CONSIDERING the unique genius of Doughty and the primordial fascination of his subject, this one-volume edition of *Arabia Deserta*¹ is an event that ought not to pass unnoticed.

The English temper, taciturn and splenetic, is seen at its best in its contemplative adventurers; and of these Doughty is the only one whose manner of writing has the scope and stirring vehemence worthy of such magnanimous endurances. Refusing to eschew one jot of his own ancestral pieties he moves among these desert nomads, who have hardly so much as heard tell of Aysabbin-Miriam the Nasrâny prophet, with unmasked face as Khalil, the Nasrâny; and while he compels their reluctant admiration as a man of *shekhly* honour, he wins many a peevish heart in *beyt* and *menzil* by his skill as a wise *hakim*. He and his huge book are a passing strange example of what can be achieved, in art as well as in life, by a certain bone-stark integrity; and there is no doubt that the so-called archaic element in his extraordinary style may easily be emphasized to a wrong tune. He is indeed no mere antiquarian raker in ancient libraries. The honest English words he selects are there in our common inheritance for all who have the wit to snatch at them. They have been rung upon, again and again, these words, for some four or five centuries. They are not prinked or spruce or affected. They are neither erudite nor obscure. Nor does Doughty scoop them up at random. He only uses the ones that lend themselves, by a kind of chemical fatality, to his own free humour. Others, compounded of alien stuff, he lets alone.

These felicitous appropriations from the "broad-mouthed" folios of our fathers are not permitted to all. The mind that can prosperously adapt them to its own temper is a mind that must be content to pay toll for such rooted proclivity in many a banked-up limitation. The "mettle" of these "pastures" must be in a man's

¹ *Arabia Deserta*. By Charles M. Doughty. With a New Preface by the Author. Introduction by T. E. Lawrence, and all Original Maps, Plans, & Illustrations. 8vo. 1320 pages. Boni & Liveright. \$10.

very marrow or he essays such an enterprise in vain. It is indeed a sort of Bodleian of the Market-place, this open secret of a tavern-clerkly style, and the mellowness of its ripe brewage can only be tapped by a true initiate. Steady must be the arm, firm the hand, that turns the spigot at this old-English bung-hole. Of pure metal must be the spoon that stirs the good posset heartened by such antique fragrance.

But however he acquired the tang of his toll-pike style, so full of a wayfaring scholar's jibes, it was to the caustic-cozening devices of his native wit that we find him repairing in many a shrewd *káhwa* brawl among these Beduin coffee-drinkers. "What were now those great wars in the world? so that the Nasára durst make war upon the Sultan of the Moslemin!" I showed them, rolling the coffee-box, that this world's course is as the going round of a wheel. The now uppermost was lately behind, and that lately highest is beginning to descend." Nor was it only by words that he allayed their ruffling humour. Certain symbolic gestures of world-old significance pass between him and his hosts. . . . "I smooth my beard towards one to admonish him, in his wrongful dealing towards me, and have put him in mind of his honour. If I touch his beard, I put him in remembrance of our common humanity and of the witness of God which is above us."

Much, indeed, of the peculiar quality of Arabia Deserta lies in its gigantic reserve. Through all this "neighbourhood-gossip of the wilderness," as Padraic Colum so happily calls it, there runs a resigned-sardonic philosophy of the author's own, which is the more weighty from its grim taciturnity.

Khalil can fling back his "*Aleykom es-salaam!*!" to the "*Salaam aleyk!*!" of these frenetic worshippers of Allah; but when he comments in his own person upon the drift of the world his tone has little unction in it. "We look out from every height upon the Harra, over an iron desolation; what uncouth blackness and lifeless cumber of volcanic matter!—and hard-set face of nature without a smile for ever, a wilderness of burning and rusty horror of unformed matter. What lonely life would not feel constraint of heart to trespass here! The barren heaven, the nightmare soil! Where should he look for comfort? There is a startled conscience within a man of his *mesquîn* being, and profane, in presence of the divine stature of the elemental world!—This lion-like sleep of cosmogonic forces, in which is swallowed up the gnat of the soul

within him—that short motion and parasitical usurpation which is the weak accident of life in matter."

It is not only the stripping away of everything except hunger and thirst, sorrow and joy, pity and wrath, which sets the seal of such solemn beauty upon this book of the wilderness; it is the fact that these squalid privations and sun-burnt courtesies have gone on for thousands of years, under this flaming sky and glittering stars, even as they go on to-day. If in China we are aware of a sophisticated civilization that is incredibly old, here in the desert we come upon a simple civilization that is older still . . . older than the pyramids, older than the building of Troy. The very austerities of this stark life—this life from which so much brutality has been purged, not by mechanical inventions but by the magnanimous usage of old custom and human generosity—conduce to a detachment of vision which is as philosophic as it is *primaeval*.

What we contemplate in this book is a life of man upon earth which is *entirely poetic*. It is starved, it is miserable, it is filthy, it is cruel, it is menaced by every kind of danger; but there is nothing in all this excremental wretchedness, in all this leanness and violence, which could not be described by Homer himself. "Bare of all things of which there is no need," says Doughty, "the days of our mortality are so easy and become a long quiescence!" Here indeed among these Beduins, with their scolding Hareem, often so unhappy but sometimes so triumphantly rebellious, with their water-skins and girdle-bread, their dates, their coffee-pestles, their goats, their dromedaries, their love-locks drenched in camels' urine, their saffron-dyed beards, their night-sky meteors and horns of their new moons, Doughty has managed to restore to us, as he saturates himself with it all and notes it all down, something of that primal Adamic happiness in mere existence, that amplitude and expansion of heart under huge duress, which had been the secret tradition of humane poetry from the beginning. *Mithil el-mawt*, as the nomads say, "living is like unto dying"; but Doughty compels us to recognize a royal tact, a fatherly consideration, a *sheikhly* graciousness, beneath many a filthy cotton tunic and wretched kerchief. Nor did they stint him of their responses to his most venturesome jests. "Men," he remarks gravely of this, "will yield half their soul with the smile."

Musing upon these desert-scenes, lying on our elbow with the Nasrâny in Sheykh Zeyd's *menzil*, listening to his young wife

Hirfa's girlish-shrewish chatter, drinking drop by fragrant drop the heaven-given coffee, a slow insidious deadly suspicion begins to waylay us as to what loss, what appalling loss, in pure material happiness, we have suffered under our occidental sciences! Between pitiless necessity and paradisiac intermission of discomfort there is constant alternation in these nomad-booths.

In the unharvested wilderness where "a thousand years are as one day," mankind hath comforted its spirit by making of the laboured ritual of an hour's pleasure the obliteration of months of misery.

It is because Doughty possessed in his own nature so large a measure of the musing humanity of the geniuses of old time that this bare existence of skin-exposed privation rises in the mirror of his tough mind to a very marvel of beauty. His imaging of nomad ways and of desert terribleness has many aspects woeful to a queasy stomach; but there emerges from it all such a vivid rendering of the eternal contrasts of good and ill upon this earth, that the most machine-dulled of modern readers is fain to cry, with El Araab, "*Wellah! It is the truth!*"

Arabia Deserta is crowded thick with memorable pictures of noble and ignoble men. Here is the whole hurly-burly of the world between burning air and burning sand. Here are the diurnal relaxations and reliefs of our poor flesh, set down without fastidiousness and without malice. For behold! the time-old courtesies of the desert are the ultimate ritual of man's life in all climates; and the nomad's resignation in the face of the end thereof is the basic wisdom of our condition.

Not only is bread and salt a covenant between man and man among these children of Adam; but every alleviation of hunger, thirst, desire, weariness, assumes a religious significance and gathers up the vague motions of the human heart towards the overshadowing unknown. The "*God bless you!*" of the trickiest beggar in our western cities hath something in it of this primordial gesture of our race.

"I am weakened with hunger, I cannot draw and drudge; but let my old camel drink a little which remains in the troughs and God will requite you.' When they heard my words they answered, '*Wellah!* he says truth; God help thee, Khalil; and have no care for this, but sit down, that it is we will water her.'"



A WOODCUT. BY EDVARD MUNCH

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IRISH LETTER

April, 1927

PRIDE in the literature of their country, such as breaks out more frequently perhaps in English authors than in those of other nationalities, is not a sentiment which appears to find any flamboyant expression amongst Americans, so that I shall not, I hope, ruffle the susceptibilities of any reader of *THE DIAL* when I relate that a little group of eminent Irish authors, discussing recently the relative standing of Irish literature, agreed that Irish literature was on the whole as great in achievement as American literature. And even as I write I find in *The Irish Statesman* this sentence of A. E.: "Ireland with four million people has produced a literature at least as important as the United States with a hundred and ten million people." I should explain—out of respect for those readers, with whom I can sympathize, who may be inclined to point out that after all Ireland has no Emerson or Whitman—that there is a growing tendency in Ireland to extend the significance of the term Irish Literature and to make it include the Irish part in English literature. It is claimed that so far back as the seventeenth century, writers like Berkeley, Swift, and even Congreve, were all moulded by the distinct culture of a nationality which has only now received political recognition. On this subject I cannot do better than quote from a letter received from a correspondent who strongly objects to my own use of the term "Anglo-Irish literature":

"At the end of the period of the Plantations [in the seventeenth century] it is probable that among the Protestants the descendants of the Planters much outnumbered those of the old colony who now adhered to Protestantism, but as the influx was gradual and took place over several generations, and since at the beginning of the period the old Catholic Norman-Irish counted as the handers-on of tradition and culture to the Protestants, I hold the view that the Irish, born and educated in Ireland, were always in the preponderance among educated men in Ireland, and that there was a

true continuance of tradition; which means that the true roots of our culture in Ireland at present (except for the real Gaelic remnants in the west) are to be found in the Norman period A. D. 1200-1500: thus making Ireland quite parallel to England and Scotland, in each of which a fusion of Norman with local elements of population took place in the same period."

This new claim of Irish literature admits only of a pragmatic demonstration: if it could become the animating principle of Irish literature it would be true; and to bring Bernard Shaw and Berkeley within the entelechy of Irish literature it only requires that their true spiritual heirs should appear in the coming generations among the citizens of the Irish Free State. The implications of some such decisive manifestation of Irish genius might indeed be retrospective, and the age-long spiritual collaboration of Ireland with England might appear to the literary students of the future in a somewhat new light.

We have not heard much of this claim till now, for amid the extravagant hopes raised by the Celtic Renascence, when Irish writers were entering into full possession of their inheritance of legend and mythology, all that went before Standish O'Grady and his Bardic History appeared to be forgotten—Carleton and Le Fanu, not to speak of Swift and Berkeley. There are now however a good many indications that the subject-matter of the Celtic Renascence has come within sight of exhaustion. I will only mention one significant fact, that the most prominent of the younger writers, Mr Liam O'Flaherty, seems to have turned away from the "Celtic sources" and to have reverted to the realism of Carleton: he might be called, indeed, allowing for many things peculiar to himself, a Carleton who has read the Russians. And it is now that Irish literature is beginning to feel the need of a background of thoughtfulness, and how much it missed when, in the nineteenth century, it failed to have an Irish Emerson, a Moses who might have smitten the rock of Irish mentality, and caused a new stream of thought to flow. For, if I may express myself with candour, I do not think there is much in the new entelechy theory: I do not think there is any chance of recovering England's spiritual debt to Ireland, any more than there is of getting back the hundreds or thousands of millions which, according to the theory of the Repub-

licans, England still owes Ireland. No, Ireland's chance is an indigenous thinker of her own, or perhaps—since Irish literature lies particularly open to Russian influence—some nobly incomplete soul like Tolstoy or Dostoevsky, whose suffering becomes a martyr's affirmation of a new spiritual completeness. An Irish Emerson is difficult to conceive. Read only Mr Joyce's account in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* of the young men of the National University and you will appreciate the difficulty.

Meanwhile there is Yeats, who, with his international fame, his personal charm and authority, his devotion to culture, his theatre, his share in the management of the State, occupies—if regard be given to intrinsic quality rather than to the scale by which one is too much inclined to measure these things—a position in Dublin which seems almost modelled on that of the great exemplar of Weimar, busies himself with versions of Sophocles, indifferent to the malcontents of the new generation. Culture, culture! Yeats insists, quite like Goethe. Culture, indeed, is not necessarily a stimulant to literary production. It is not the well-educated who are chiefly moved to speech, it is the young men, the young women, who disconcert us with new forms, new norms, new matter. New modes of experience are for ever turning up in this our age, and we are not at the end of it yet.

We have an instance of this in Ireland at present in young Liam O'Flaherty, hailing from the last stronghold of an ancient culture, the Aran Islands, and yet it is with him as if the Celtic Renascence had never been. Here the miracle for which Ireland has waited, a pure Gael with literary genius, has actually happened; yet in place of the resuscitation of Gaelic culture, possibly in the Irish language itself, we contemplate in him the age-long spectacle of the Gael abandoning his birthright. How insincere poets are, after all, one is tempted to believe, when they talk about "leaving great verse unto a little clan." Here was a poet who might have ruled a little kingdom of his own, a nook of the world virginal as ancient Greece with a language practically all to himself, and what do we see him do? Abjuring his birthright, for which the jaded poets of Paris and London would have signed away their reputations, he hies him to the slums and brothels of Dublin in quest of elemental passions. What secret of human affinities is disclosed in the zest and understanding with which this young islander, his coat still

drenched with Atlantic spray, looks round him in this fetid world? Must we conclude that the slum-dweller is the intensified form of the peasant? In the slum, as in the remote west of Ireland, Mr O'Flaherty finds that untrammelled play of character with which he is at home. He is almost without a rival in some of his studies of animal life, and it is perhaps natural that he is most interested in man when man is nearest the animal, as he is, no doubt, in the slums. Mr O'Flaherty likes to take for his subject something which he can watch from moment to moment: a sea-gull finding its wings, a dog tracking down a mountain-goat, a murderer closing in upon his victim.

There is an equally disconcerting quality in the talent of Mr Eimar O'Duffy; for though, unlike Mr O'Flaherty, he has been deep in Gaelic lore and literature, he has emerged from these studies with a spirit emancipated by mockery and mischief. The gaiety and gusto of King Goshawk and the Birds quite carry you off your feet. Gaelic literature seems to inspire above all things a confidence in the elemental passions, and a scorn of all the timidi-ties of our hesitantly-Christian civilization; and indeed when I think of Synge's *Playboy*, of the buoyant irreverence of the Shavian drama, of Stephens, O'Flaherty, and now of Mr Eimar O'Duffy, I am suddenly moved to remember the Irish part in the ancestry of William Blake, and to wonder whether it is not in the direction of Blake rather than of Berkeley that Irish literature should look for its philosophical background. The formal adoption of William Blake as the inspired forefather of modern Irish literature might constitute a norm for it at least as clearly defined as that which the influence of Emerson imparts to American literature. All Irish writers revere him. Yeats and A. E. build themselves upon him. If only Blake, instead of reading Ossian, could have read the ancient Irish sagas, and instead of "Albion" and "Jerusalem" could have prophesied of Eriu and Tirnanoge!

I think there is a good deal in this conception of Irish literature, and I recommend it to those historians of Irish literature who have hitherto attempted in vain to make of it a consistent story, looking hopelessly after those writers on the other side of the Channel who appear to have dropped out of the story. Future developments of literature in Ireland may well make it irresistible!

JOHN EGLINTON

BOOK REVIEWS

A COMPANION TO HISTORY

ENGLISH MEN AND MANNERS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: An Illustrated Narrative. By *A. S. Turberville.* 10mo. 531 pages. The Oxford University Press, American Branch. \$4.

THIS book, one supposes, may be classed under the vague but convenient heading of Companions to History. It is one of the privileges of Literature, as of all Arts, that it is always possible to do it badly: but it would require a singular talent in failure to make a collection of contemporary illustrations of men and manners at any period entirely uninteresting. No doubt a good old-fashioned Debating Society might busy itself with more than one question as to the fashion in which the letterpress should be accommodated to the illustrations themselves. Perhaps the ideally perfect way would be to make each "cut" the subject of a shorter or longer description of its own subject and that subject's appurtenances. Mr Turberville, however, has preferred to reverse the process and bring in his "cuts" as, in the ordinary sense, illustrations to a more or less continuous history of the century itself. He had a perfect right to do so: and the result is very far from *mere* "letterpress." It is neither dull, nor partisan, nor as a whole inaccurate, though to describe for instance, Johnson as "assuming quite a proprietary air with Garrick" because "they were educated at the same school in Lichfield" is a little inaccurate, decidedly inadequate, and rather complicatedly unlucky. Garrick did not enter the "school at Lichfield" till two years after Johnson left it. But he did go to school *under* Johnson at the ill-starred Edial venture: and, as he was almost alone there, Johnson might feel, even more than other schoolmasters towards their numerous pupils, a "proprietary" relation towards this lamb. But this is a matter of very small importance: even if it had companions they need not interfere with the idle perhaps, but not infamous pleasure one may take in turning over the illustrations and letting "the shapes arise."

These "shapes," according to a now not uncommon habit with which the most ferociously fossil of anti-modernists can find no fault, are of the most miscellaneous character—not merely what are vaguely called "pictures" of persons, places, and events; not even merely coins, caricatures, *et cetera*, but facsimiles of manuscripts and Print; sketches of furniture and costume; bill-headings, copies (alas! only *copies*) of bank-notes; advertisements of all kinds. It is rather odd how this variety assists the imagination not only to the extent of the separate objects presented, but by the association with each other and with yet other things supplied by that imagination itself. The book becomes not merely a companion to history but one to literature as well. You *see* Catherine Hayes being burnt and her villainous son hanged on one page: and Lord Bute as a "Scotch Idol," leaning on the gigantic jack-boot which served as his punning emblem, on another. In yet another caricature of rather unusual excellence, one of the few abuses for which, so far as one knows, no excuse for a moment maintainable has ever been put forward, is rather cleverly hit off. A formidable but rather handsome divine, floating in the air with gown *et cetera* flapping like wings round him, and a mighty shovel-hat on his head, has his foot on one steeple, is advancing the other to a second at some distance, and stretches out his hand to a third, while there seem to be cathedral towers further off where perhaps the hand for which no immediate occupation is provided might find it or at least payment for it. Perhaps the two little children who are turning wheels in a rope loft do not look particularly unhappy: but Mr Turberville in more than one place admits that, in the "children's employment" question, it was rather the extravagant hours worked than any particular hardship in the labour that was objectionable.

However this may be, sometimes, if not always, there is an odd *impassibility* about these pictures. The spectators of Master Tom Billings, already mentioned as pendent from his gallows, appear to be not less casually attentive than their likes might be to-day when somebody is riding in Rotten Row. Hogarth himself, who has hardly ever been excelled in giving individuality to a crowd of faces, has put little more feeling into those of a strong House of Commons Committee with a half-naked victim of the scoundrel warder Bambridge before them, than if they were listening to

someone reading a blue-book. Single figures, whether deliberately caricatured or not, are, however, much better treated. You could hardly have a more excellent presentment of "a malignant and a turbaned Turk" (he actually has a turban or something very like it) than the portrait with sword drawn, of the great Captain Blackbeard—the amiable gentleman who (did he not?) fired pistols under a card-table for fun. Again, such a drawing as Sayers's caricature of the Duke of Grafton, where the caricature element is reduced to the lowest degree, is a pleasant relief after the exaggerated monstrosities of curve and dot which are allowed to pass muster nowadays.

For a single object of study one might suggest the physiology and physiognomy of the wig. The wig is—on what one may be permitted to call the face of it—one of the most extraordinary garments—or if the expression be preferred, ornaments—in the history of costume. Its origin may have been traced—but if so I am not acquainted with the tracing—to some early and unrecorded visit to Papua. This is the *most* ultimate thing that suggests itself: the Sudan comes next. It is not, as most garments are in reality or pretence, a protection: for from that point of view it is overtopped and made useless by the hat. It intimates, if it does not actually involve, getting rid of the natural covering; it is, in a way, as though you should have yourself flayed before calling in hosier, shirtmaker, or tailor. And yet there is no doubt that it adds a singular dignity—you might almost call it beauty—to the countenance. That is to say, of course, the full-bottomed wig does: not a "scratch" or "tie." Take, for instance, the portrait of that right reverend toadeater and very indifferent churchman, Bishop Hoadly. The face is not exactly ugly but exhibits an unpleasant combination, when you look into it, of meanness and bullying. Yet, *till* you look into it the wig (no doubt assisted by splendour of gown, sleeves, collar, et cetera) succeeds to no small extent in carrying off the worser nature; dignifying the meanness somewhat; and allowing the bullying to be not much more than stern.

But there is not the least necessity to take things so seriously as this: nor, though Mr Turberville gives you proper help for doing so, to consider whether Lord Chancellor Hardwicke was the great lawyer and statesman whom some almost beatify, or the wretched

creature that Horace Walpole would like you to think him. Nor, turning for a moment only, to the most serious matters of all, need you ask Mr Turberville himself whether he is not a little hasty in dismissing certain terrible but magnificent verses which Swift pretty certainly wrote on the Last Judgement as a "blasphemous parody." It is much better to take the goods provided for you in the panorama fashion already suggested. If the spectacle of Byng being shot is distressing (though you know it *did* "encourage the others" very mightily, and Voltaire's own countrymen paid pretty heavily for his joke) you can turn to a couple of pages exhibiting specimens of that marvellous furniture which somehow or other has never been surpassed in grace if perhaps it has had superiors in comfort. You can look at Tragedy and Comedy pulling Mr David Garrick each her own way: observe, perhaps with sympathy, that Thalia is evidently getting the better of Melpomene; and wonder whether Mr Thackeray had the picture in his mind when he drew the frontispieces for *Pendennis*. And you can also question whether in depicting the three scarecrows engaged in "curing" gout, colic, and "tisick" with punch, Gillray meant to stigmatize "the ravages of strong drink" so strongly as Mr Turberville does. The wicked wretches seem remarkably cheerful under their sufferings—and the treatment thereof!

We do not generally think of the eighteenth century as an imaginative period: and yet in a way it was. The four satiric playing-cards on the South Sea Bubble, which are reproduced here, are by no means commonplace. Our Free Traders nowadays would of course be shocked by the first—a sketch of a ship loading German linen at Harburg (not *Hamburg*) with the moral

"Encourage trade abroad for time to come:
And, like kind fools, neglect your own at home."

The second and third deal with America—the second being, owing to its small scale, not very easy to interpret. Indians and wild beasts may be at least guessed at: while, in the third, very prim Quakers, with a label "Pensil [sic] vania Company," are selling great tracts of land to eager buyers. The fourth shifts to the Whale Fishery where a cetacean of the largest size has already got one boat in his mouth and has just sunk another with his tail.

In old days I was more than once in Worcester College Library, Oxford, where these cards seem to be. I wonder if the whole pack is illustrated in sequence?

From a different order of things considerable delight may be derived by politicians in imagining a parallel, on this or that public man in whatever country they inhabit, to the broadsheet, *A Hue and Cry after a Coachman*. This is a ferocious description of Walpole, the centre of some forty or fifty lines of abuse being the rather ingenious "He formerly served a widow lady of the first rank till he was dismissed from her service for selling her corn and hay," referring to his Tower sojourn for corruption.

We have seen that Mr Turberville most properly shews up the country's excess in drink; it is a pity that circumstances did not permit him to do a similar office for its at least equal excess in eating. Before the Restoration we have not many details of dinners: but Pepys begins, Swift carries on, and other writers of the first or almost the first rank continue into the nineteenth century the enormous and almost appalling lists of food which were set before our ancestors and which (it has been charitably suggested) their staffs of servants, proportionately much larger than our own, may have helped them to clear. But it is very difficult to *picture* a feast in this respect, unless on a very large scale, for individual objects. He might, however, have done more than he has with dancing: though he has not neglected Bath and some others at least of the watering-places which were its principal home. It would moreover be illiberal to grumble at what is not here, considering the amount that is actually furnished. The navy is fairly dealt with and the plates showing Anson's Centurion and her galleon victim perhaps will not weaken, in some "eyes of the mind," the old idea that a sailing ship under full sail is the most beautiful object ever attained by human skill in the more mechanical kinds of art. The army has rather less to shew for itself though the exceedingly neat young officer whom Bunbury has depicted—with cocked hat, cockade, plume, pigtail, very smartly cut coatee, and continuations to suit, while before him three exceedingly but not unnaturally "raw" recruits are being literally licked into shape and line with the sergeant's cane—is a good piece of comedy.

But perhaps on the whole, as has already been suggested, the

political caricatures are the best. They gradually went off in the nineteenth century: and the twentieth has certainly not seen in England any decided return to felicity of anything like the old kind.

It may be only an idle attempt to philosophize: but these illustrations of history always bring more or less to my mind the famous ejaculation started by Goldsmith in his *Eastcheap Reverie* and emphasized by Carlyle but put in a sort of interrogative—"Pretty much like our own, Mr Rigmarole?" The superficial differences are of course enormous: whether the real and in the right sense of the word, substantial ones are so great is another question. There have been of course times which were apparently convinced that they were extremely different from others. The earlier eighteenth century (it was getting in Goldsmith's time, if not always in his own case, more doubtful) was quite certain of it. Some nineteenth-century people such as Macaulay followed in the same line: and I see that in England (I do not know what is the case in America) everybody who can claim to be really of the twentieth century is quite sure that everything has altered and is altering in it. I think I may claim without folly or fatuity (the words translate each other partially but do not exactly coincide) that a good many of us who were born in or about the middle of the nineteenth, escaped this delusion not of course in the very least through any merits of ours, but simply because the clock of things had come round to freedom from it. We had got to know a good deal more of the past and it had perhaps given us something of a conviction of the great doctrine of compensations—which makes you rather careless of the future but not such a very bad judge of the present. However, no more of this for it gets controversial. Still, things of the past sometimes *are* curiously like our own. Some may prefer Catherine the Great to Lenin and some Lenin to Catherine. But Potemkin was said to have planted impromptu villages on the Volga to suit the Empress on journeys and something similar has been said to take place when visitors explore the dominions of the Soviet.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

A POET'S NOVEL

PALIMPSEST. *By H. D. 12mo. 338 pages. Paris: The Contact Editions; New York: Houghton, Mifflin Company. \$3.50.*

IT is with a peculiar excitement that one opens the leaves of this first novel by so accomplished a poet. Here corroborated and amplified one hopes to rediscover in H. D.'s prose the "fire," "restraint," and "devout paganism," so justly esteemed by another poet of the same sex and of a distinction even greater.

Palimpsest consists of three separate stories achieving a rather loose unity by the underlying idea which links them together and which gives the book its title.

Here is the emotion, or so I should suppose, which animates the author and which she seeks to render eloquent. Each moment that occurs, though appearing to cancel the moment that precedes it, merely erases it sufficiently to give a semblance of stability to its own existence. Thus the past is, when viewed with the eyes of vision, as palpable, as solid, and as dynamic as is the present. To H. D. the antiquity of decadent Athens is as pressingly importunate as is the obvious insistence of modern London, now decadent in its day. And if Antiquity lives in her imagination and motivates her thoughts, so also does her own past retain a static reality co-existent with each moment of the succeeding days, as well as with the future. Thus art becomes an expression of multifarious imprints laid one on top of the other "like old photographic negatives," which imprints can no longer be viewed with singleness of purpose. All creative form should seek to encircle these vague, diverse, and remotely related imprints, blurred and indistinct, but never completely obliterated. And just as the past by maintaining its life in the present manifests its vitality, so it equally illuminates the futility of all illusions, above all the illusion of morality, morality which at its best can be but a matter of fastidiousness and good taste. Only one divine and eternal alleviation is allowed to man, and that is the gift of poetry, the power to create and to delight in those pursuant snatches of rhythmic expression which recur and recur to redeem the fretted chaos of existence.

The first episode in the book takes place at about 75 B. C. Hipparchia, a poet and the daughter of the Greek cynic Crates, is living in Rome with her lover, a Roman, cultivated, but with the limitations of his epoch and race. The chief interest of the story lies in the content of Hipparchia's mind, in her repulsions and attractions, in her subtle, weary, egoistic, and neurotic responses to her lovers, and to the scenes about her. The lines of poetry which spring into her mind, and which give the pace and tone to the narrative, are often beautiful and effective, as well as at other times they seem tiresome and irrelevant in their self-conscious reiteration. The prose is sumptuous and rich in imagery, but frequently lacking in dignity, simplicity, and restraint. The short staccato sentences, clipped off and left standing like impudent, half-clothed intruders at a classic banquet, are of course, indicative of the modern method and of H. D.'s obeisance before it. But to me they seem curiously unfitting, and, indeed, not integral with her deeper individual perceptions, as unfitting as certain words such as "*insouciance*," *take congé*," "*arrière pensée*," and "*a special goût*," which obtrude like modish tokens of modernity dropped on a marble stairway. One longs, indeed, for what Petronious calls *oratio pudica* or "the modest style which does not abandon itself to the fluidity of every moment." And it is surprising to discover a poet with so slight a respect for the right use and economy of words that she can repeat, over and over and over, the same ones, such as stark, singular, pollen-dusted, and hyacinthine, in places where a more detained attention would have shown them to be easily substituted for fresher ones. This carelessness is discernible as well in the proof-reading, for perhaps never was a book so obviously published for the appreciation of an eclectic minority allowed to appear so overflowing with printer's errors. In the matter of rhetoric one suspects that inattention betrays almost always a lack of intensity, and one feels that although H. D. has emotional power and authentic inspiration, her passion, when it does lapse, becomes by turns turgid, arid, or irritatingly mannered. But where indeed to-day is that prose "broad and great, refined and sensible, sane and beautiful" that one has grown to expect in every enduring classic? Let me give a typical example of the short sentences. "She regarded Marius. The same. Thinness. The heavy spaces, chin, cheek, throat, rounded with muscles, it seemed, gone hollow. The face grey almost in texture." And now let me quote another

sentence in contrast, and there are many such sentences. "The soft saffron of her under dress showed like light lying on marble, sunlight in a pool, inset on some marble floor from which bird beak would dip and bird throat would lift and from which the very scattering of drops from that bird's frail pointed bill would cause the most distant, the most remote of music."

The second story, with its beautiful symbolic title, *Murex*, is of the three the most successful. The American, Raymonde Ransome, is really but another name for the Greek Hipparchia, for it is into the same aloof, poetic, ardent, conflicting, cleverly self-conscious temperament that we are introduced. But this story does in some way achieve both density and unity. The philosophic idea fuses with the action and fills out the structure. One is snatched into the dramatic complexities of Raymonde Ransome's emotions, her perceptions become our own, her developing insight our engrossed instruction, so that when the partition that separates her past from her brooding, suffering comprehension does finally yield, we, with her, contemplate those static pictures, static and intact, yet glowing too with a full, imperishable, present life of their own. It is in this story indeed that one can best measure the true potentialities of H. D.'s powers and one feels that its success is due largely to the fact that the situation has been nourished and matured in her mind before she began to write, whereas in the others she has sought to find a vehicle for her emotional response and has been betrayed, both by her own somewhat headlong virtuosity, and by her too receptive reading of such masters as James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, and even, it might seem, of Henry James, masters all of whom have developed a style native to their unique, disparate, and supreme endowments.

If, as is claimed by at least one critic, it is dishonest in an age of transition not to seek out fresh methods of technique, then I for one can but hope that without harm to subtlety it will in time be again original to be simple and carefully selective, to be simple and selective in the sense that Proust and Pater are simple and selective; that is, to think with heightened clarity of what one desires to express, and then so to condense and pack this burden that it can be carried undamaged, without stumbling or confusion, from page to page, portable and precise, to be at last deposited for the absorbed persuasion of the reader.

ALYSE GREGORY

THE POETIC DILEMMA

POEMS. *By T. S. Eliot. 12mo. 63 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.*

Rococo. *By Ralph Cheever Dunning. 16mo. 22 pages. Edward W. Titus, Paris. Not for Sale.*

PELAGEA AND OTHER POEMS. *By A. E. Coppard. With Wood Engravings by Robert Gibbings. 8vo. 44 pages. The Chaucer Head. \$6.*

IT has been often enough, perhaps too often said, of late, that the almost fatal difficulty which confronts the poet nowadays is the difficulty of finding a theme which might be worth his power. If he be potentially a "major" poet, this difficulty is thought to be particularly formidable, if not actually crippling; but for even the "minor" poet (to use minor in no pejorative sense) it is considered serious. Mr T. S. Eliot, whose Poems have been reprinted by Mr Knopf, has himself contributed something to this theory. In his admirable note on Blake, in *The Sacred Wood*, he suggests that Blake was potentially a major poet who was robbed of his birth-right by the mere accident of there not being, at the moment, a prepared or traditional cosmology or mythology of sufficient wealth to engage, or disengage, his great imaginative power. He was compelled, in the absence of such a frame, to invent a frame for himself; and in this was, perhaps inevitably, doomed to failure. Had he been born to a belief as rich and profound as that which Dante inherited, might he not have been as great a poet? . . .

This is an ingenious idea; but it is possible to take it too seriously. It is obvious enough that some sort of tradition is a very great help to a poet—it floats him and sustains him, it carries him more swiftly and easily than he could carry himself, and it indicates a direction for him. But a fact too often lost sight of, at the present time, is that the great poet may be, precisely, one who has a capacity to find, at *any* given moment, a theme sufficient for the proper exercise of his strength. There were contemporaries of Dante who were excellent poets, but for whom the cosmology which en-

chanted Dante was not evocative. If Blake scanned his horizon in vain for "huge cloudy symbols," Goethe, scanning the same horizon, was not so unsuccessful. It is true enough that, with the decay of religion as a force in human life, poetry must be robbed of that particular *kind* of conviction, as has been noted by Mr I. A. Richards; but to assume from this that the poetry of the future must inevitably be a poetry of scepticism or negation is perhaps to oversimplify the issue. Poetry has always shown itself able to keep step easily and naturally with the utmost that man can do in extending his knowledge, no matter how destructive of existing beliefs that knowledge may be. Each accretion of knowledge becomes, by degrees, a part of man's emotional attitude to the world, takes on affective values or overtones, and is then ready for use in poetry. The universe does not become each year simpler or less disturbing: nor is there any reason to suppose that it ever will. The individual who is born into it will continue to be surprised and delighted by it, or surprised and injured; and in direct ratio with this surprise and delight or surprise and injury, he will continue to be a poet.

The wail of contemporary criticism, therefore, to the effect that poetry can find nothing to cling to, leaves one a little sceptical: though it is easy enough to sympathize with the individual poets who, suffering from that delusion, have for the moment lost themselves in self-distrust. Mr Pound and Mr Eliot are perhaps very typical victims of this kind. But whereas Mr Pound has evaded the issue, seeking asylum in a sense of the past (rather half-heartedly held) Mr Eliot has made a poetry of the predicament itself. His poetry has been from the outset a poetry of self-consciousness; of instinct at war with doubt, and sensibility at odds with reason; an air of precocious cynicism has hung over it; and his development as a poet has not been so much a widening of his field—though at first sight *The Waste Land* might suggest this—as a deepening of his awareness of it. *Pru*rock, who antedated by a decade the later poem, could not give himself to his emotions or his instincts because he could not bring himself, *sub specie aeternitatis*, quite to believe in them: he was inhibited, and preferred to remain a despairing spectator: but at the same time he wished that he might have been a simpler organism, "a pair of ragged claws." The theme of *Gerontion*, a good many years later, is the same: it is again the paralysing effect of consciousness, the "after such knowledge, what

forgiveness?" And *The Waste Land* is again a recapitulation, reaching once more the same point of acute agony of doubt, the same distrust of decision or action, with its "awful daring of a moment's surrender, which an age of prudence can never retract."

The reissue of *Poems* is not the occasion for a detailed review of Mr Eliot's early work, however; for our present purpose it is sufficient to note that Mr Eliot has conspicuously shared the contemporary feeling that there are no "large" themes for the poet, and that he has had the courage and the perspicacity to take as his theme precisely this themelessness. Why not—he says in effect—make a bitter sort of joke of one's nihilism and impotence? And in making his bitter joke, he has written some of the most searchingly unhappy and vivid and individual of contemporary poetry. One feels that his future is secure, by virtue of his honesty quite as much as by virtue of his genius.

If Mr Coppard and Mr Dunning have not Mr Eliot's importance, they nevertheless interest us, for they too are characteristic products of the contemporary poetic dilemma. What on earth—Mr Dunning seems to say—can one write about? Can one, for example, attempt such a worn-out thing, in poetry, as the telling of a romantic and tragic love-story? . . . That is what, in his *Rococo*, he has wanted to do. He has a good story that he would like to tell us, and he also, obviously, wants very much to write about love, or passion, and to do so with passion. Nevertheless, the fashionable distrust has somewhat poisoned him. How can one devote oneself to anything so *vieux jeu* as the mere telling of a love-story in verse? If it is to be done at all, he appears to think, one must do it as a kind of game; one must lend to the performance a kind of detachment, give it distance, force the thing into some sort of artificial frame. Above all, one must not have the air of accepting it as anything but a kind of convention.

For these reasons, perhaps, he casts his poem in a somewhat archaic *genre*—a somewhat decorative convention which might not have been displeasing to the Keats of *Isabella*—and then, to make it quite clear that he knows what he is doing, that he is not adopting this fragrant and old-fashioned convention out of pure innocence of heart, entitles it *Rococo*. And he does it, one must add, really admirably: he keeps his chosen convention singularly pure; and it is further to his credit that he manages to make his story delightfully vivid and quick, despite this heavy burden of what one must

feel initially is an artificial manner. His technical skill is remarkable. It is no small feat to tell a story twenty-two pages long in *terza rima*, with none but feminine rhymes: if any one doubts it, let him try it. The effect of the *terza rima* is very rich, gives a delightful intricacy to the narrative movement, and also gives it weight and resistance. It is no great disparagement of Mr Dunning's poetic skill to note that now and then he has been a little too much led by the rhyme-scheme, and that the demands of the elaborate form have occasionally dragged him into long sentences or verse-paragraphs which are either diffuse (padded) or too involved. One also feels that the persistent feminine ending is, in a poem of this length, rather cloying. At the outset, it is charming; but eventually one finds oneself longing for a departure from the dying fall, from the note of minor sadness and ornamental grace, and wishing that now and then one might encounter something more emphatic and robust. The problem was not, however, an easy one—the use of masculine endings might not so sympathetically have suited Mr Dunning's carefully calculated manner. As for the story itself, it is excellently managed. Mr Dunning gives it dignity and beauty, and a considerable psychological subtlety. It is only at the end that he at all breaks down. There, faced by the necessity of presenting a simple and stark and tragic action, he seems to have found that his chosen "tone" was not quite adequate. At any rate, the ending is, by comparison with the beginning, a little bit huddled and unconvincing. One feels that something a shade more spacious was indicated.

Mr Coppard is also, but in a different sense, a victim of the poetic dilemma. He brings to his poetry the fine qualities of imagination and whimsical humour which make so many of his stories delightful; but he seems to be of two minds as to what, precisely, poetry should be. He alternates between a straightforward presentation of a state of mind (in a kind of semi-narrative free verse) and a light playing with lyric forms of a decidedly seventeenth-century flavour. The latter are skilful and charming, but a little thin; the former are genuine and moving but not quite enough "shaped." One puts down his book somewhat unsatisfied, but with the conviction that so individual a mind might do something really first-rate in verse, if it could only discover its own note. But no critic can tell a poet what his own note is—he must find it for himself.

"POET AND SAINT . . ."

BAUDELAIRE: *Prose and Poetry. Translated by Arthur Symons. 8vo. 280 pages. Albert and Charles Boni. \$4.*

FIRST I must protest against the words *Baudelaire Complete* which the publishers have placed on the wrapper of this book. There are two hundred and seventy-eight pages of translation. Mr Symons has translated most, but not all, of *Les Fleurs du Mal*: he has not included the section *Spleen et Ideal*, and even the most casual admirer of Baudelaire will miss *Le Voyage*; he has translated part, but by no means all, of *Les Paradis Artificiels*; only the *Petits Poèmes en Prose* are complete. But even if Mr Symons had given us the whole of the poetry, and the whole of the *Paradis Artificiels*, the word *Complete* would still be deplorable. There are now two fine editions of *Baudelaire Complete* in process of publication: that of Conard and that of *La Nouvelle Revue Française*; each runs to about fifteen volumes. In the case of many authors, this misstatement would not have so much mattered; for some even voluminous authors can be judged fairly by a very small part of their work. But not Baudelaire. It is now becoming understood that Baudelaire is one of the few poets who wrote nothing, either prose or verse, that is negligible. To understand Baudelaire you must read the whole of Baudelaire. And nothing that he wrote is without importance. He was a great poet; he was a great critic. And he was also a man with a profound attitude toward life, for the study of which we need every scrap of his writing. To call this volume "*Baudelaire Complete*" is to mislead the public.

To turn from the publishers to the translator is to turn from an error to a defect. But "defect" is not the right word. Mr Symons has made a good translation, in the Symons style. If our point of view to-day was the point of view of thirty years ago, or even of twenty years ago, we should call it a good translation. To read Mr Symons now, is to realize how great a man is Baudelaire, who can appear in such a different form to the 'nineties and to the nineteen-twenties. In the translation of Mr Symons, Baudelaire becomes a poet of the 'nineties, a contemporary of Dowson and Wilde. Dow-

son and Wilde have passed, and Baudelaire remains; he belonged to a generation that preceded them, and yet he is much more our contemporary than are they. Yet even the 'nineties are nearer to us than the intervening generation—I date in *literary* generations—the fact that they were interested in Baudelaire indicates some community of spirit. Since the generation—the *literary* generation—of Mr Symons and the 'nineties, another generation has come and gone—the *literary* generation which includes Mr Bernard Shaw, and Mr Wells, and Mr Lytton Strachey. This generation, in its ancestry, "skipped" the 'nineties: it is the progeny of Huxley, and Tyndall, and George Eliot, and Gladstone. And with this generation Baudelaire has nothing to do; but he had something to do with the 'nineties, and he has a great deal to do with us.

But the present volume should perhaps, even in fairness, be read as a document explicatory of the 'nineties, rather than as a current interpretation of Baudelaire. In an interesting preface—too short—Mr Symons avows that *Les Fleurs du Mal* "in regard to my earliest verses, was at once a fascination and an influence, and because from that time onward his fascination has been like a spell to me, and because that masterpiece has rarely, if ever, been equalled, has rarely, if ever, been surpassed." Mr Symons is himself, we must remember, no mean poet; he is typical of the 'nineties; this influence of Baudelaire upon Mr Symons was manifestly genuine and profound. Why is Baudelaire so different now? We can learn something about Baudelaire, and about the 'nineties, and about ourselves.

Mr Symons' preface is very interesting: it is perhaps the most important part of the book. What is interesting is the attitude, so completely of his epoch, toward "vice." For Mr Symons there is, at least *en principe*, a ritual, an hierarchy, a liturgy, of "vice" or "sin." Here is a whole paragraph so significant that I beg to give it entire:

"In the poetry of Baudelaire, with which the poetry of Verlaine is so often compared [*i.e. compared by Mr Symons and his friends—we no longer find much in common*] there is a deliberate science of sensual and sexual perversity which has something curious in its accentuation of vice with horror, in its passionate devotion to passions. Baudelaire brings every complication of taste, the exasperation of perfumes, the irritant of cruelty, the very odours and colours

of corruption, to the creation and adornment of a sort of religion, in which an Eternal Mass is served before a veiled altar. There is no confession, no absolution, not a prayer is permitted which is not set down on the ritual. . . . 'To cultivate one's hysteria,' I have written, 'so calmly, and to affront the reader (*Hypocrite lecteur, mon semblable, mon frère*) as a judge rather than a penitent; to be a casuist in confession; to be so much a moralist, with so keen and so subtle a sense of the ecstasy of evil: that has always bewildered the world, even in his own country, where the artist is allowed to live as experimentally as he writes. Baudelaire lived and died solitary, secret, a confessor of sins who had never told the whole truth, *le mauvais moine* of his own sonnet, an ascetic of passion, a hermit of the Brothel.'"

This paragraph is of extraordinary interest for several reasons. Even in its cadences it conjures up Wilde (past ruined Regent Street Lord Henry Wootton lives) and the remoter spectre of Pater. It conjures up also Lionel Johnson with his "life is a ritual." It cannot get away from religion and religious figures of speech. How different a tone from that of the generation of Mr Shaw,¹ and Mr Wells, and Mr Strachey, and Mr Ernest Hemingway! And how different from our own! Mr Symons seems to us like a sensitive child, who has been taken into a church, and has been entranced with the effigies, and the candles, and the incense. *Such rugs and jugs and candle lights!*

And indeed the age of Mr Symons was the "golden age" of one kind of child, as the age of Mr Shaw was the age of another kind of child. If you take his paragraph to pieces, you will find much that is wrong; though if you swallow it whole, you will digest something that is right. "*Passionate devotion to passions*": no man was ever less the dupe of passions than Baudelaire; he was engaged in an attempt to explain, to justify, to make something of them, an enterprise which puts him almost on a level with the author of the *Vita Nouva*. "*The irritant of cruelty*"—did Baudelaire "bring" it, or did he not merely examine it (there are some important paragraphs in *Mon Coeur Mis à Nu*). Who ever heard of a Mass before a

¹ Of course Mr Shaw and Mr Wells are also much occupied with religion and *Ersatz-Religion*. But they are concerned with the spirit, not the letter. And the spirit killeth, but the letter giveth life.

veiled altar? And hysteria! was any one ever less hysterical, more lucid, than Baudelaire?¹ There is a difference between hysteria and looking into the Shadow. And when Mr Symons says, a few pages later, that Baudelaire's "impeccable" work is "the direct result of his heredity and of his nerves" I can only protest violently. If any work is to be described as the "direct" result of heredity and nerves—and "direct" here can only suggest that heredity and nerves sufficiently account for the work—then I cannot agree that such work is impeccable. We cannot be *primarily* interested in any writer's nerves (and remember please that "nerves" used in this way is a very vague and unscientific term) or in any one's heredity except for the purpose of knowing to what extent that writer's individuality distorts or detracts from the objective truth which he perceives. If a writer sees truly—as far as he sees at all—then his heredity and nerves do not matter.² What is right in Mr Symons' account is the impression it gives that Baudelaire was primarily occupied with religious values. What is wrong is the childish attitude of the 'nineties toward religion, the belief—which is no more than the game of children dressing up and playing at being grown-ups—that there is a religion of Evil, or Vice, or Sin. Swinburne knew nothing about Evil, or Vice, or Sin—if he had known anything he would not have had so much fun out of it. For Swinburne's disciples, the men of the 'nineties, Evil was very good fun, quite exciting. Experience, as a sequence of outward events, is nothing in itself; it is possible to pass through the most terrible experiences protected by histrionic vanity; Wilde, through the whole of the experiences of his life, remained a little *Eyas*, a child-actor. On the other hand, even to act an important thing is to acknowledge it; and the childishness of the 'nineties is nearer to reality than the childishness of the nineteen-hundreds. But to Baudelaire, alone, these things were real.

Mr Symons appears a more childish child than Huysmans, merely because a childish Englishman—bred a Protestant—always appears more childish than a childish Frenchman—bred a Roman. Huys-

¹ It is true that Baudelaire says "*J'ai cultivé mon hystérie.*" But it is one thing for him to say it of himself, another for Mr Symons to say it about him.

² There is a better, and very interesting, account of Baudelaire's heredity in Léon Daudet's book, *L'Hérédo*.

mans' fee-fi-fo-fum *décor* of mediaevalism has nothing on Mr Symons' "veiled altar." Huysmans, by the way, might have been much more in sympathy with the real spirit of the thirteenth century if he had thought less about it, and bothered less about architectural lore and quotations from philosophers whom he may have read but certainly did not understand: he is much more "mediaeval" (and much more human) when he describes the visit of Madame Chantelouve to Durtal than when he talks about his Cathedral.

As a translator, I have already suggested that Mr Symons turns Baudelaire into a contemporary of Symons. To say this is at once a very high compliment—for the work of translation is to make something foreign, or something remote in time, live with our own life, and no translator can endow his victim with more abundant life than he possesses himself—and a warning. It is not a warning against Mr Symons as translator. Mr Symons is as great a translator as Mr Symons can be. That is to say that his translation is, from his own point of view, almost perfect; we have no suggestions to make to Mr Symons himself. His translation of Baudelaire is a permanent part of literature. Only, it is what Baudelaire means to Mr Symons' generation; it is not what Baudelaire means to us. For one thing, we now are much better qualified to appreciate the very traditional character of Baudelaire's verse; we are nearer to Racine than is Mr Symons; and if we translated Baudelaire ourselves we should bring out just those resemblances to Racine which disappear completely in Mr Symons' translation. It is a pity that Mr Symons has not translated some of the poems in which this affinity with Racine is most apparent. The poet who wrote

*"Andromaque, des bras d'un grand époux tombée,
Vil bétail, sous la main du superbe Pyrrhus. . .*

De l'ancien Frascati vestale enamourée. . .

*Nos Pylades là-bas tendent leurs bras vers nous.
'Pour rafraîchir ton coeur nage vers ton Electre!'. . ."*

is not remote from the poet who wrote of "*La fille de Minos et Pasiphaë. . .*" We can, however, call attention to passages where it seems to us that Mr Symons has enveloped Baudelaire in the Swinburnian violet-coloured London fog of the 'nineties. His paraphrase of *L'Invitation au Voyage* is significant.

"My child and my star,
Let us wander afar. . ."

Baudelaire wrote

"*Mon enfant, ma soeur,*
Songe à la douceur
D'aller là-bas vivre ensemble."

The word *soeur* here is not, in my opinion, chosen merely because it rhymes with *douceur*; it is a moment in that sublimation of passion toward which Baudelaire was always striving; it needs a commentary out of his Correspondence, for instance the astonishing letter to Marie X. . . cited by Charles Du Bos.¹ (On this whole subject Du Bos, whose essay on Baudelaire is the finest study of Baudelaire that has been made, has some admirable words: *ce désir contemplatif qui n'a besoin que de la présence, et qui ne possède vraiment que parce qu'il ne possède pas*). And further on, in the same poem, when we come to the magnificent lines

"*Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,*
Luxe, calme et volupté"

we are surprised to receive from Mr Symons

"There all is beauty, ardency,
Passion, rest and luxury."

The only one of these words that is right is "beauty." Baudelaire did not, we may be sure, take these substantives at random, nor did he arrange them at random. It is not for nothing that he put *ordre* first; and if Mr Symons had understood *notre* Baudelaire he would not have substituted—"ardency"! But order is positive, chaos is defect, and we imagine that Mr Symons was not trying to *avoid* Order—he simply did not recognize it. We can see that Mr Symons, trained in the verbal school of Swinburne, is simply anxious to get a nice sounding phrase; and we infer that all that he found in Baudelaire was a nice sounding phrase. But Baudelaire was not a disciple of Swinburne: for Baudelaire every word counts.

Here is another passage where Mr Symons seems to me merely to

¹ Charles Du Bos: *Approximations* page 219.

have made a smudgy botch. It is striking because it is Baudelaire in his most sardonic, bathetic vein—something which might be called strictly "modern," and which should therefore (considering that Mr Symons belongs to a younger generation than Baudelaire) have appealed to Mr Symons. These are well-known lines from the *Voyage à Cythère*.

*"Quelle est cette île triste et noire? C'est Cythère,
Nous dit-on, un pays fameux dans les chansons,
Eldorado banal de tous les vieux garçons.
Regardez, après tout, c'est une pauvre terre."*

Mr Symons astounds us with the following:

"What is this sad dark Isle? It is Cythera whose birth
Was famed in songs, made famous as the fashions
Of the most ancient and adulterous passions:
It is a beautiful and a barren earth."

Here Mr Symons' "stretchèd metre," always reminiscent of Cynara, fits Baudelaire's deliberately broken alexandrines better than it does in many places (in many of the poems, one feels that Pope would have been better fitted than Mr Symons). But such a mis-translation cannot be merely a confession of impotence to translate the words of Baudelaire into English; it expresses an impotence to *feel* the moods of Baudelaire—they can be expressed in English just as well as in French—an impotence to use words definitely, to use words at all unless they are the few poor counters of habitual and lazy sentiment. *Fashions and Passions*—how well we know them! We wonder even whether Mr Symons has not confused (*whose birth*) Cythera with Cytherea.

The important fact about Baudelaire is that he was essentially a Christian, born out of his due time, and a classicist, born out of his due time. In his verse technique, he is nearer to Racine than to Mr Symons; in his sensibility, he is near to Dante and not without a sympathy with Tertullian. But Baudelaire was not an aesthetic or a political Christian; his tendency to "ritual," which Mr Symons, with his highly acute but blind sensibility, has observed, springs from no attachment to the outward forms of Christianity, but from the instincts of a soul that was *naturaliter* Christian. And being

the kind of Christian that he was, born when he was, he had to discover Christianity for himself. In this pursuit he was alone in the solitude which is only known to great saints. To him the notion of Original Sin came spontaneously, and the need for prayer.

"Tout chez Baudelaire est fonction de son génie; or il n'y a rien dont ce génie puisse moins se passer que de Dieu,—d'un Dieu qui plutôt qu'objet de foi est réceptacle de prières,—j'irai jusqu'à dire d'un Dieu qu'on puisse prier sans croire en lui. . . . Cet incoercible besoin de prière au sein même de l'incredulité,—signe majeur d'une âme marquée de christianisme, qui jamais ne lui échappera tout à fait. La notion de péché, et plus profondément encore le besoin de prière, telles sont les deux réalités souterraines qui paraissent appartenir à des gisements enfouis bien plus avant que ne l'est la foi elle-même. On se rappelle le mot de Flaubert: 'Je suis mystique au fond et je ne crois à rien'; Baudelaire et lui se sont toujours fraternellement compris."

So far Charles Du Bos. Other essays, not so satisfactory as that of M Du Bos, but recent and explanatory of Baudelaire as he is now understood, are *Notre Baudelaire* by Stanislas Fumet, and *La Vie Douloureuse de Baudelaire* by François Porché.

And Baudelaire came to attain the greatest, the most difficult, of the Christian virtues, the virtue of humility. Only by long and devoted study of the man and his work and his life can we appreciate the significance of that great passage in *Mon Coeur Mis à Nu*:

"Faire tous les matins ma prière à Dieu, réservoir de toute force et de toute justice, à mon père, à Mariette et à Poë, comme intercesseurs; les prier de me communiquer la force nécessaire pour accomplir tous mes devoirs, et d'octroyer à ma mère une vie assez longue pour jouir de ma transformation; travailler toute la journée, ou du moins tant que mes forces me le permettront; me fier à Dieu, c'est-à-dire à la Justice même, pour la réussite de mes projets; faire, tous les soirs, une nouvelle prière, pour demander à Dieu la vie et la force pour ma mère et pour moi; faire, de tout ce que je gagnerai, quatre parts,—une pour la vie courante, une pour mes créanciers, une pour mes amis et une pour ma mère,—obéir aux principes de la plus stricte sobriété, dont le premier est la suppression de tous les excitants, quels qu'ils soient."

T. S. ELIOT

BRIEFER MENTION

MR. GILHOOLEY, by Liam O'Flaherty (12mo, 282 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$2.50). It is difficult to place this virile and gifted author. We know through his short stories and his sketches of animal life the delicate powers of his poetic imagination. The present novel, so sombre, so erratic, so penetrated with the quality of madness, so unrelenting in its realism, gives little scope for these more lenient insights. If he is to be likened to any living writer we must perhaps select Mr D. H. Lawrence, for both authors choose sex as the centre about which revolves a torturing chaos of illusions and insecurity, and both are equally vulnerable to the manifestations of nature: but whereas Mr O'Flaherty's flights are perhaps less exalted, he is likewise incapable of the lapses in literary taste and the shameless didacticism which so boldly display themselves in many of Mr Lawrence's later novels. Certainly Mr O'Flaherty's star is still rising.

GO SHE MUST, by David Garnett (12mo, 246 pages; Knopf: \$2.50). No one could possibly fail to be pleased with this deft and charming story, so admirably restrained, so nimble and so light, so witty and so subtle. Mr Garnett pictures, or rather creates, the character of a young girl whose mind, with the quick rise and dip of a swallow on a summer morning, veers to every flick of circumstance. That it is not a mind which rises with the untrammelled ecstasy of the lark or digs into the secrets of life with the fierce pertinacity of the woodpecker does not detract from our sympathy and admiration. Mr Garnett should be read by some of our young American writers who have never learned that obstinate craft of maintaining a veracious balance between the inner life and the outer circumstance.

WHITE BUILDINGS, by Hart Crane (10mo, 56 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2). Mr Allen Tate, in a eulogistic preface to Mr Hart Crane's volume of verse, expresses a fear lest "his style may check the immediate currency of the most distinguished American poetry of the age." He remarks also: "Crane's poems are a fresh vision of the world, so intensely personalized in a new creative language that only the strictest and most unprepossessed effort of attention can take it in." After this, a sufficiently unprepossessed effort of attention becomes difficult. Mr Crane has ability: he makes good phrases, and is capable of writing excellent blank verse; but he seldom writes a completely satisfactory poem. Partly this is due to certain affectations of idiom, to a straining and self-conscious and disingenuous preciosity; partly it is perhaps occasioned by an unreflecting indulgence in what one might call high-class intellectual fake. When Mr Crane writes less pretentiously, he is more successful, as in *In Shadow* and the second part of *Voyages*. The latter has great beauty, both of colour and movement.

DARK OF THE MOON, by Sara Teasdale (12mo, 92 pages; Macmillan: \$1.50).

Miss Teasdale's refined and fastidious intelligence may be once more appreciated in this her latest volume of poems. If her irony is sometimes touched with self-consciousness and her susceptibility falls too often short of ardour, if she has none of that dark and irregular passion which we are apt to prize in poetry, we can forgive her, for she has in certain verses, such as, for instance, *Fontainebleau*, and *Foreknown*, proven herself a true poet, and to be a true poet, if on but one or two occasions, is to have more than compensated for any number of mild and pretty lines.

COMPOSITION AS EXPLANATION, by Gertrude Stein (Brochure, 16mo, 59 pages; Hogarth Press: 2/6). So many people want to know and in this, her Cambridge lecture, Miss Stein explains. "Each period of living differs from any other period of living not in the way life is but in the way life is conducted and that authentically speaking is composition." In a still greater burst of confidence, Miss Stein exclaims, "Continuous present is one thing and beginning again and again is another thing. These are both things. And then there is using everything." Also there is the being "simply different as an intention." With these first definite revelations of the new technique, Mr Sherwood Anderson, Mr E. E. Cummings, Miss Mina Loy, and the other disciples may take heart of grace, avoid fumbling in the dark, and sweep on to a complete modernity.

ART AND COMMERCE, by Roger Fry (Brochure, 10mo, 23 pages; Hogarth Press: 2/6). Mr Fry himself calls this essay, originally a lecture given in Oxford upon the occasion of an exhibition of posters, a "cold douche." In it he insists, quietly and firmly, that art is one of life's extras, due to an excess of energy that spontaneously asserts itself. The patronage of art is vanity, but a certain rebelliousness upon the part of geniuses ill adapts them to play the rôle of prestige-purveyors to the rich. This leads Mr Fry into some nice distinctions between genuine and mercantile art. Society, which is invariably alarmed by manifestations of the spirit, defeats art in the end by making it a tradition. Mr Fry invites some such punishment upon his own head for his little book is packed with what society must consider "revolutionary thought."

DISCORDANT ENCOUNTERS: Plays and Dialogues, by Edmund Wilson (10mo, 297 pages; A. & C. Boni: \$2.50). In the imaginary dialogues contained in this volume Mr Wilson presents, presumably, everyone's ideas but his own, and this is not, we know, because he himself is infertile in ideas. Any one familiar with the writings of this grave and prolific critic is aware that ideas come as readily from his pen as ejected pellets from "the meditative owl." Certainly Mr Wilson has juxtaposed in an interesting and perspicuous manner a number of significant points of view both in art and in science. As for the plays, it is perhaps just as well that so enviably articulate a spokesman for some of our younger writers should himself be prone to certain of their most recognizable naïvetés.

TRANSITION, Essays on Contemporary Literature, by Edwin Muir (12mo, 218 pages; Viking Press: \$2). Mr Muir in his search for the dominant tendencies of our age chooses the writers in English whom he deems most typical and most original, and seeks to extract from their attitudes and their methods a general insight into our irreverent era. These writers include among others James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Lytton Strachey, and Edith Sitwell. Though he makes no claim to permanent evaluations, yet he brings to his analyses so clear and unbiassed a mind, a mind so versed in sorting, juxtaposing, and balancing ideas that one is led on, instructed, and usually converted to his manner of thinking. How seldom, indeed, one discovers a critic "uncorrupted by literary prejudices," sympathetic with modernity and at the same time conversant with European traditions! One has but a single reservation and that is concerned with the impeccability of Mr Muir's taste, a disturbing suspicious reservation based on his choice of certain quotations. But this does not really detract from the value of this admirable and stimulating book, a book prolific in suggestion, lucid in style, and convincing in argument.

THE NEGRO IN AMERICAN LIFE, by Jerome Dowd (8vo, 647 pages; Century: \$5) is an uncommitted and careful study of the possibilities of improving the race-relation of the negro minority in America to the white majority. The negro is studied in all his varieties of social and racial character, and in all his varieties of contact with the white population, in every locality of the United States in which he could have social influence—in Harlem, New York; in the "Old South Side," Chicago; in Ward Seven, Philadelphia; in the Tidewater South; and so forth. It is the view of the author, expressed with justice and supported by a fair account of the facts, that the black race has valuable cultural potentialities, and that the way through the still vexed negro problem in America lies in the cultivation of co-operation and mutual respect between the races, in which cultivation the white race, for its own interest, will take the lead, teaching the negro, first how to find and take that place in the national economic structure for which his particular aptitudes fit him; and second, how to develop his own legitimate culture as the social outgrowth of his aptitudes.

WHALING NORTH AND SOUTH, by F. V. Morley and J. S. Hodgson (10mo, 235 pages; Century: \$3). The first part of this book is written by an adventurous younger brother of Christopher Morley. His contribution is interesting, but we could wish that the ancient profession had been reviewed from a wider and more philosophic standpoint. For a moment, perhaps under the influence of the genial culture of his celebrated brother, he meditates with poetic imagination upon the corpse of a dead whale. "Where went that spirit, which played in his magnificence—which made this mountain leap and sport, quickened the eye, retracted that balloon of a tongue, lifted that fallen jaw?" His use of the word balloon at the end of so fine a passage shows Mr Morley's sense of style as being still immature. His confederate, Mr Hodgson, is a better photographer than writer. He is the kind of man who would take satisfaction in being known as "a hard case"—who makes free use of *cliché* phrases such as "the supreme law of the wild."

DARWIN, by Gamaliel Bradford (8vo, 315 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$3.50).

Why when Mr Bradford is so obviously responsive to nature, so appreciatively conversant with the great masterpieces of the ages, so full of tolerance, modesty, goodwill, and rational understanding, does one become irritated with his expositions of celebrated men? Is it that one suspects the author's urbanity of covering a certain emptiness in his own mind, his tolerance of being merely a lack of personal intensity? Would he treat with the same tender reverence a *living* revolutionary thinker, Herr Siegmund Freud, for example? Is not his apparent emancipation exactly tempered to suit the readers of that estimable magazine, *The Atlantic Monthly*? If one wishes to seize at a glance the process through which Darwin has passed at the hands of Mr Gamaliel Bradford one has but to glance at the jacket of the present volume where a mild old man looks at one with mock stern eyes, then open the book and regard the photograph from which this drawing was made. What sad and formidable force is there!

SAMUEL BUTLER AND HIS FAMILY RELATIONS, by Mrs R. S. Garnett (10mo, 228 pages; Dutton: \$3.75). If the late Samuel Butler went to Hell, as is very likely, be sure the Devil has already placed a copy of Mrs Garnett's book in his hands. It is fiendishly contrived to torment him. It is just such a book as the friend of his unlamented relatives would write. She attempts to prove that Butler *père et mère* were, after all, nice! As if that were in question!! The only thing charged against them was the unforgivable sin of stupidity, and out of their own mouths—Mrs Garnett quotes them at length—they are proved guilty. However, it does not appear that there is anything to be done about it. It sufficiently punished them to be the parents of a genius.

MYTH IN PRIMITIVE PSYCHOLOGY, by Bronislaw Malinowski (16mo, 94 pages; W. W. Norton: \$1). This study of the rôle fulfilled by myths in the lives of primitive peoples is the result on the author's part of several years spent among a Melanesian tribe in New Guinea. His thesis which he upholds in clear, simple prose is that myths, far from being merely narratives or fantasies created to explain certain recalcitrant facts of nature, are in very truth integral with the cultural context of tribal life, constant by-products of living faith, and inseparable from the daily habits and manner of thinking of the people. The examples chosen to point his contention would alone repay one for reading this concise little book. One should perhaps in duty add that Mr Malinowski is an unrestrained admirer of that delightful imparter of misinformation, Sir James Frazer.

HISTORY OF ENGLAND, by George Macaulay Trevelyan (8vo, 723 pages; Longmans, Green: \$4.25). It is hard to believe that within the same limited number of pages any history of England could be written to rival the volume we are considering. Mr Trevelyan in very truth is a great historian. His vision is wide and deep and he possesses the rare gift of being able to present in an interesting form the salient facts which go towards elucidating each particular epoch. He himself from first to last remains dispassionate, objective, uncommitted.

THE THEATRE

THE first play of the New Playwrights Theatre is *Loud Speaker*, by John Howard Lawson. It commits the one unpardonable sin in the theatre—it is dull. The fault lies partly with Mr Lawson and partly with Mr Harry Wagstaff Gribble, who staged the play, and partly with Mordecai Gorelik who made the setting. That leaves out the actors.

Our President's admonition to "look well to the hearthstone, therein all hope for America lies," is quoted on the programme, and makes us therefore suppose that *Loud Speaker* takes as subject for farce the private lives of public men. Briefly, the following elements are distinguishable in the play:

- that candidates for governor have had fleeting mistresses in Atlantic City and still grow sentimental about them;
- that wives of such candidates, wanting love, turn to mysticism;
- that daughters drink and urge attractive youths to seduce them;
- that politicians are hypocrites;
- that the tabloids are energetic and false and vulgar;
- that Americans love bunk;
- that American life is chaotic;
- that this chaos, which has a lot of dancing in it, is maddening and amusing.

I submit that these ideas are commonplace and tedious, the property of every college junior who has reached Mencken. To be sure, there is another point, which can be made by inserting the words "in American plays it is common to find" before the "thats" above. But Mr Lawson's play is not a burlesque of American plays, it is a farce in itself. Yet it is a farce in which the satire is so obvious and heavily handled that no protestations of non-serious intentions can stand against the evidence of the play itself.

If the intentionally bad singing and good dancing and preposterous speeches and *cliché* lines of the play are not meant as elements in a satire, they are simply not good enough to stand by themselves; if they are elements in the composition, they are much too long—they grow wearisome. If the jokes are bad jokes intentionally, they are too numerous and not bad enough; if they are meant to be good,

they are dreary. And when the whole action stops for the insertion of words, music, and dancing which are all exactly on the level of the Garrick Gaieties, I really have to give up speculation on the author's purpose and record the simple fact that I was unutterably bored.

When I reviewed *PROCESSIONAL* I suggested that Mr Lawson's form told more about America than his subject; I felt that the form was his theme, and the subject, which he overvalued, was merely raw material. I was accused of not recognizing a fundamental of art: that form and matter coincide, that form embraces matter, that matter fills form. It seemed to me that with Mr Lawson these ideal events failed to occur. In the present instance I should say that he is playing with uninteresting ideas; that the farce he has built on them is not funny, nor is it illuminating as satire. And that the structure, which is rather like that of *PROCESSIONAL*, is here neither appropriate nor interesting.

My objection to the constructed scenery, which is extremely interesting to the eye, is only that it slows up an action which is already far too slow. Mr Gribble, a comic writer of fine parts and an expert director, ought to have seen this. He ought also to have carried out the syncopation of events and of ideas more easily. But perhaps he found them as insignificant as I do.

I protested last month against the bitter reception of *DAMN THE TEARS*, an experimental play by a new dramatist. The New Playwrights Theatre, as an experiment, deserves support. But I do not think that Mr Lawson, with his fourth play, can count on any indulgence.

Pirandello's play, *RIGHT YOU ARE IF YOU THINK YOU ARE* is appearing at matinées in a Theatre Guild production outside of the regular subscription season. I am curious to know whether the Guild considered this too dainty a morsel to throw to their subscribers, or not good enough, or what. It is, in fact, somewhat less tedious than most of Pirandello; it has some intensity of life in spite of the weariness of the author's mind. As a piece of dramatic construction it seems to me rather woeful. Pirandello has done what every playwright would like to do; that is, he has written a play in which the tag-line of each act is the same—in this case a mocking reference to "the truth." A group of busy-bodies determines to discover the true reason for the conduct of a young

functionary in a small Italian town; he supports his mother-in-law in one house, his wife in another, yet communication between all three seems of the friendliest. At the end of each act an explanation is offered and passes, momentarily, for the truth; but the various truths cancel out, they are all true and all false. It is an excellent idea, treated with no lightness, and with a fatal verbosity. To me the brilliant second-act endings of *THE PLAY'S THE THING*, by Molnar, conveys a similar idea with grace and dramatic effectiveness. But, of course, Molnar is only a playwright, and Pirandello is a Thinker.

In the production Beryl Mercer, as the mother-in-law, is extraordinarily right and Edward Robinson concentrates in himself an intense passion and life; the audience, like most audiences assembling in the Guild theatre, cackled with delight at the appearance of Miss Helen Westley in a grotesque costume and Miss Westley made it easy for them to continue to cackle, and to forget Pirandello, by "registering" her lines. She was so successful that several minor members of the cast imitated her in waddling or wiggling or otherwise cutting up comic in their exits. I am wholly unable to determine whether the Guild cares at all for the plays it produces, or cares only for the laughter of idiots.

The fault in *SET A THIEF*—, a melodrama, is capable of demonstration. The end of the second act has some plain and fancy shooting and a trace of eeriness; but before the curtain is allowed to come down, a cap is added to the climax in a roll of thunder. This play is rather like *WOODEN KIMONO* in that the motives of the characters are as mysterious as their movements; there is something to wonder about in addition to the usual speculation of who and how. In *CRIME* there is no mystery; there is a lightness of touch, here and there, which is not usually associated with the work of Mr Samuel Shipman; and James Rennie, who plays the best crook of the lot is, as I overheard when I left the theatre, "the personality boy." He is, in fact, quite attractive and acts a little more than he used to, although he seems still aware of his attractiveness if he does no more than stand still. The big scene in *CRIME* is a daylight robbery every detail of which has been mapped out beforehand for the benefit of the audience. The suspense is terrible; and as some-

one says in *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST*, I hope it continues.

They are still standing them up at *GEORGE WHITE'S SCANDALS* which must be nearly half a year old now, so nothing detailed need be said. But it is worth remarking that Mr White, by putting a great deal of energy into his shows, by reducing to a minimum the slow-motion tableaus which held up the *FOLLIES*, by speeding his scenes on, has established himself in Mr Ziegfeld's old position as a prime revuer. He has, in the present *SCANDALS*, no single great outstanding star, yet in their several ways Ann Pennington, Frances Williams, Willie Howard, Buster West, and Tom Patricola are technicians of the first order. I was particularly impressed with Miss Pennington's perfect performance of the Black Bottom; especially when she does it the first time, solo, it is all dance from her hair to her toes.

I return to an ancient query of my own. Why is such purely technical perfection so rarely seen on the legitimate stage? And I might add, why is it that so often, when it does occur there, it is the work of recruits from the lighter forms of entertainment?

I sincerely hope that *METROPOLIS* will still be visible when these notes are printed. The promoters seem sceptical, although it has outlived the majority of films which come to Broadway for only one week. But if it fails it may turn out to be another *CALIGARI*, a film which you will with pleasure go miles to see. Until you have seen it you will not know how maddening and unnecessary an imposed plot can become. *METROPOLIS* is interesting only for the cinematic handling of masses of men and of machinery; but in these respects it is tremendously good. It has made electrical discharges, eminently cinematic in themselves, parts of a dramatic climax; it has made machinery into dynamic compositions. Above all there is a sense of mastery in the direction, a definite assurance that all the technique is not only known, but is being put to a proper use.

I wish seriously that German directors would not try to produce bastard American movies; just as I wish American directors would not try to import German tricks without knowing what the tricks should be used for. The Americans have certain technical virtues;

almost all of them, with the help of chemists, have been able to show on the screen a series of pictures more pleasing in superficial texture—in depth and tone—than the German; recently the Germans have created that branch of technique which is called "camera angles," and they have used it correctly, with predetermined effect. The first American directors who released the camera from its fixed position seem to have no idea what the angles can be used for, how they can heighten interest, carry on narrative, condense passage-work and connecting scenes, and so through every portion of a film. The director of *SUNYA*, Mr Albert Parker, is an exception, and I hope that his next picture for Miss Swanson will give him something worth working on. The present one, which elaborately opened the Roxy Theatre, is terribly trivial.

I recommend *STARK LOVE* for its obvious and natural virtues; if Man Ray's *EMAK BAKIA* is shown again by the Film Guild it is worth the attention due to all experiments in abstract movies. And for those who would like to see an old-fashioned *mélange de genres* in the best pre-Lessing manner, I recommend the Vitaphone in all of its programmes. But not to those who care for the movies.

GILBERT SELDES

MODERN ART

MRS SHAMEFOOT "used always to say it would be at Versailles, or Vallombrosa, or Verona, or Venice. Somewhere with a V." I think if that highly modern but fragile lady were still extant she might now agree that it could begin with a P. At least Ponca City in Oklahoma has become the captivating though not quite realizable (perhaps it's for that very reason) city of my dreams. It used to be Samarkand, which was followed by a nostalgic interest in the eighteen-century cure at Lucca, and I even succumbed to a pre-Gauguin feeling for the Marquesas Islands (due to Melville's *Typee*) which dwindled, however, almost to the vanishing point before Gauguin arrived to give it the coup de grâce. As a rule it is wiser to restrict one's commerce with such places to the dream-world. To touch them is fatal. I made that mistake with New Orleans, the only city in the United States that had, in the generation just past, an appeal. I adored it a dozen or so years ago, worshipped at all the shrines, and came home to read in the newspapers of the destruction of the old Hotel St Louis, the most romantic and satisfactory building on the continent, and the burning of the heavenly opera house. New Orleans immediately receded farther into the distance even than Tahiti. So, considering everything, I don't think I shall go to Ponca City, Oklahoma.

I had never heard of the place until the night of the Marland banquet in the Hotel Plaza to the competing sculptors. Mr Marland had come on from the West with certain friends and business associates to view the submitted sketches for the monument that is to glorify the hitherto unhonoured Pioneer Woman of the Plains, and a little conviviality was considered necessary to put us and him in the mood. It was the lady who sat next to me at this dinner (pearls, white satin, and a calmly youthful face that in itself I thought distinguished—so rarely is calmness associated with youth nowadays in the eastern part of the country) who mentioned Ponca City. She came from there, she explained. "From where?" I enquired, thoroughly mystified. "Why, from Ponca City," she repeated, "the place where this statue is to be put up. I should think you would know where Ponca City is," and she eyed me

doubtfully, as though suspecting a joke that through repetition had grown tiresome. Disavowing any intention of being funny and deplored my ignorance, I was able, after a while, to elicit the picture of Ponca City that still fascinates me.

It centres, it seems, about this Mr Marland who made all the money for himself and the others so quickly, and who gives the statue. He it was, so my neighbour with the pearls informed me, who first of the new community became interested in art. "Indeed, he keeps us all stirred up," she continued. "He is interested in many things and likes us to share in his enthusiasms. For instance, he loves hunting, keeps a great stable, and on the day of the hunt any one at all decent in the town can go to his place and have a mount free. His home is a fine villa in the Spanish style. He entertains a great deal. We all came east in his private car—it is most comfortable. He took Mr Davidson, who came to Ponca City to do portrait busts of Mr Marland's family, out to the coast in this car upon a little excursion. Then there is the golf-course which is certainly handsome, and due, I believe, to his initiative. And, oh, so many things. He doesn't seem to think of himself but of the general life in Ponca City. You know this Pioneer Woman is but the beginning. He has other ideas for the advancement of the community. . . ." But she had said enough to make me think that pioneering must be, upon my word, vastly different now from what it was in the old days, and, take it all in all, a mighty attractive life for those who have the vocation. It was with the arrival of this thought that it occurred to me that there was, after all, no longer a necessity for me to go to Avila, Spain, to spend my declining years, a plan that I had hitherto held to; Ponca City would do as well. Not that I altogether fancied dwelling in the shadow of a fifty-foot bronze Pioneer Woman by, possibly J. Bryant Baker, but I could have, I hoped, a little bungalow facing in another direction, with an outlook upon the inspiring activities of the place, and possible glimpses of all the sculptors going to and coming from the Spanish villa, and all that sort of thing. . . . Mr Marland who just then arose to do a tiny after-dinner speech, looked the part that had just been given to him—an essentially modest man, markedly idealistic, and one to whom the possession of millions would be but the starting point. What I marvelled most at was the lack in his features of any trace of strain or hardness. There was nothing in

him of Rockefeller asceticism or of Ford sternness. I had always thought that the quick accession to riches could only be managed at the expense of soul—an idea probably acquired from a reading of the novels by Sinclair Lewis and Booth Tarkington—but studying Mr Marland and his associates, all of them young and uncrushed, I saw that I and the novelists would have to readjust our conceptions of American millionaires. Apparently a new type has arrived, a type we artists can have something to do with.

And apparently there is in this first arrival the makings of a most amenable art patron. It was reported, for instance, that after his inspection of the twelve sketches by the twelve sculptors, he expressed satisfaction in all of them and said that he would be content with any one. That is decidedly the proper spirit. A scheme of popular voting for the best of these models has been inaugurated and it has already had lovely results in publicity and will doubtless eclipse anything in that line that we have experienced. Which is all to the good! The public actually seems willing to think over the problem as to which is the best of these twelve sketches. It is a little exercise in connoisseurship that we ought to follow up quickly, if we are to have educational profit, with another pleasing problem of the same sort and only a shade more difficult. And by and by we might have an art public. But that is looking far ahead. Just at present, I believe, nobody in his senses, would agree to letting the public have its way, even with this Marland Pioneer Woman. The public would inevitably choose the least of the twelve. Out of the million but very few, obviously, would recognize the best bid for the permanently bearable. Mr Marland has wisely decided to cast the deciding vote himself.

Not but that he'll have his difficulties. There is no easy way out in these matters. Already what is called "human nature" has manifested itself in this competition. The twelve little sculptors, it appears, are not just so many little lambs. Already Arthur Lee, one of the little sculptors, has misbehaved himself in the actual presence of Mr Marland. Something, I believe, about Maurice Sterne's innocent error in making his sketch four feet high instead of the three feet to which the others adhered. The cry arose that the larger model gave Mr Sterne an unfair advantage. And then there was the episode of Paul Manship. Mr Manship, upon hearing that Jo Davidson was already on the spot in Oklahoma doing por-

trait busts of members of the Marland family, refused to have anything to do with the affair. "Call that a competition!" said he, with withering sarcasm. . . . But such things are trifles and every great art patron must realize sooner or later, and preferably sooner, that artists are after all human; and subject to all the wayward impulses the mind is heir to. The great Michael Angelo himself had more than one sharp encounter with his pope and Benvenuto Cellini said things to his duke that he afterwards apologized for. The little fable about the puppies by Epictetus—"See how they love each other, but throw a bone among 'em"—is thought by some to be malicious but it is not; it is merely practical. Throw a commission for a five-hundred-thousand-dollar bronze statue among a group of sculptors and you may expect politics. That this should be so, will not I hope disillusion Mr Marland. 'In fact the difficulties in doing good are part of the attractiveness of doing good.

HENRY McBRIDE

MUSICAL CHRONICLE

THE polytonic concertos for orchestra and for wind instruments, works of the contemporaneous Paul Hindemith recently given in New York, have archaic hardness. Conceived in twentieth-century fashion on contrapuntal harmonic levels, they move to classically dry, precise, snappy rhythms. The spry wraith of Philip Emanuel Bach marshals the harsh metallic tones of the piece for full orchestra. The grinding music for brass and woodwind steps away to the stiff beat of an old Prussian military march. Symphonies startlingly unlike those which early won this most energetic of the young German moderns the sympathy of patriotic, pious Germany!

It was, very largely, their filial restatements of romantic Teuton norms that got Hindemith's first hard and benevolent Brahmsian and Pfitznerish violin sonatas opus 11 and string quartets opus 10 and 16 their enthusiastic and grateful welcome. He himself was presented to the world as a stripling Arminius repulsing legions of cosmopolitan musical influences, *Welsch*, semitic, and atonal. Now, in breasts once comforted by his green pieties, the entirely unsentimental, atonal, and archaicizing processes of his recent maturing works must grate unmercifully. The expansive Germany of the peasant-soul, and its appropriate norms, are absent quite from them. None the less, the new concertos are exactly what the unindividuated tyro-work were merely taken to be: the new burgeoning of an old tradition.

Never a poet endowed, say, in Strawinsky's degree with the instinctive capacity for the harmonization of expression and actuality, Hindemith seasonably showed himself responsive to the pace and rhythm of contemporary life. In the crisis of European reconstruction, he produced his first original music; and these atonal pieces, the dances from the puppet-opera *Das Nusch-Nuschi* op. 20, the chamber music for small orchestra op. 24, No. 1, the chamber music for five wind instruments op. 24, No. 2, and the suite for piano op. 25, entitled 1922 are based upon an idiom directly born of the situation. Deficient, possibly, in distinction and persuasiveness and the wit that is the better part of brevity, Hindemith's

deliberately brutal post-war music is none the less not to be confused with the mass of stuff popular, jazzy, and vulgar only out of an intellectual necessity. Synthesized in an evident striving for order, his mechanical rhythms, drab colours, parodic accents, jazzy shufflings, jerks, and brayings, interplays of pure sonorities which in their automatic, soulless romance almost burlesque the elder emotional forms, bring the human organism, if only superficially, into relation with its debased, vulgarized, bottomless environment and the bitter time of *lèse-majesté*. Referable to sensation and perception through the testimony of an imaginative and technical use of their new, naturalistic material, and haunted, for all their deliberate hard-boiling and impersonality, by the romantic German feeling the author so rigorously strove to exclude, Hindemith's transitional pieces unmistakably declared themselves the fruits of experience and portions of a vital process.

The character of the libretti selected by the composer for his three one-act operas, strengthens the picture of a relentless struggle for contact with actuality. Oskar Kokoschka's expressionistic drama, *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen*, grasps at the root of the after-war sex conflict more grandiosely treated by D. H. Lawrence. *Das Nusch-Nuschi*, the comedy for Burmese marionettes by Franz Blei, stands in the relation of a satyr play to the vehemently erotic music-dramas of the period before the war; in one place even satirizes *Tristan und Isolde*; and part ironically, part recklessly, wholly accurately, finds the gentle, animal, and sleepy tone of contemporary eroticism. *Sancta Susanna* by August Stramm, the latest member of the dramatic triptych (op. 12, 20, and 21) deals with the obsessional desire frequently coupled with egoistic sanctity, and part of the general breakdown. And like the young Richard Strauss before him, Paul Hindemith has turned for poems for his songs to poets with a sense of the beat of the times. As Strauss set verse by John Henry Mackay, Otto Julius Bierbaum, and Richard Dehmel to music, so Hindemith has used lyrics by Christian Morgenstern, Elsa Lasker-Schüler, and Rainer Maria Rilke.

The jazz age died upon its worshippers. The symbol passed from music-making of the sort that produced Hindemith's relentlessly rushing *Kammermusik*, 1921, with its obsessional beat, vulgar and hysterical gibbering, sullen bareness of colour. While expansivity and exaltation were still suspect, shimmies, rags, fox-

trots, bostons, as excuses for sarcastic expression and the indulgence of surface feelings, lost their interest for composers. Like Strawinsky, the Six, and the other creators of tendency-music, Hindemith was confronted with the problem of uniting mechanical, "objective" rhythms with "subjective," personal, and strongly sentimental elements. Present to him doubtless no more than half intellectually, and chiefly as a problem of form, it automatically found a temporary solution through the age's antiquarianism and the fascination which the masterworks of the baroque possess for all to-day. In the characteristic rhythms of the early eighteenth century, so spry, robust, and precise, there lies the suggestion of a kind of movement objective, external, removed from the empirically personal, and still not incompatible with human feeling, with comedy as distinguished from tendency-wit, and with ethical values. The beginnings of freedom beckoned. And in Hindemith's case, at least, the adaptation of archaic forms was not insincere. These lived in his blood, and had become conscious partly through education and partly through the experience of the archaicizing tendency in *Die Meistersinger* and those of most of the experiments of Max Reger. They were not norms foreign to his race, to his musical culture, to his personal past, and deliberately annexed.

Hindemith's combination of archaic forms with the idiom produced by the experiments of 1918-1922 creates what patriotic Germany thought to find in his early sonatas and string quartets. His amalgamation of received materials and materials found through contact with actuality, breathes, and transmits the inherited impulse. Of the archaicizing new music, the best has been composed by Germans, by Kaminski and his neo-Bachian group, and by Hindemith; and Hindemith's compositions excell the rest in geniality, in charm, and in rhythmic and instrumental invention. The close of the second movement of the orchestral concerto, for example, the memorable page of the whirring, chattering string-music, is no parlour-magic. Rhythmic flow was always spontaneous in Hindemith; and in his newest work the periods sprout from each other as directly as branches of spruce. Often drab in quality, all his volumes move, amuse, and hold the interest tense with their alacrity. There is a fine roughness in the quality of these new uncompromisingly polytonic pieces. Hindemith is still the hard

unvoluptuous young Teuton, and the hard sophisticated young modern. Only, the hardness has become cool and robust and objective like stone. Sophistication has become the feeling of the demoniacal, the recognition of evil which so daringly informs the dances of the ballet, *Der Dämon*; it has also, and more characteristically, become the levity, muscularity, and swiftness of the orchestral concerto, and the humour and manly sympathy with which the concerto for wind instruments salutes the rough old Prussian soldier-life in last farewell.

Without a doubt, the completely personal and matured Paul Hindemith is not yet arrived. Only giants are mature at thirty-two. The archaicism is probably only a temporary solution to the psychic problem. There is a German romanticism, an expansiveness, and a peasant-soul in Hindemith that he cannot much longer avoid facing. And meanwhile, he writes too much and is too readily satisfied with what he produces. But his music-making has become experience; and life moves out through it.

PAUL ROSENFELD

COMMENT

ACADEMIC feeling, or prejudice possibly, in favour of continuity and completeness is opposed to miscellany—to music programs, composite picture exhibitions, newspapers, magazines, and anthologies. Any zoo, aquarium, library, garden, or volume of letters, however, is an anthology and certain of these selected findings are highly satisfactory. The science of assorting and the art of investing an assortment with dignity are obviously not being neglected, as is manifest in "exhibitions and sales of artistic property," and in that sometimes disparaged, most powerful phase of anthology, the museum. Persons susceptible to objects of "extreme significance" may remember with gratitude in the late Lieutenant Commander William Barrett's Naval and Marine Collection at the Anderson Galleries, an albino tortoise shell decorated in scrimshaw with an American clipper ship in full sail; and in the Spanish collection of Señor D. Raimundo Ruiz, at the American Art Galleries in December, a remarkable Gothic forged iron gate and "some small objects." A two-edged Dresden rapier from the armoury of the Fortress Hohenwerfen (the Anderson Galleries) seemed to one, super-eminent—the serpent-like nudity of the interlacing spirals about the grip suggesting Swinburne's comment upon Rossetti's *The Song of Lilith*: "It has the supreme luxury of liberty in its measured grace and lithe melodious motion of rapid and revolving harmony, the subtle action and majestic recoil, the mysterious charm as of soundless music which hangs about the serpent when it stirs or springs." One cannot be dead to the sagacity inherent in some specimens of sharkskin, camellia-leaf, orange-peel, semi-eggshell, or sang-de-boeuf glaze; nor be blind to the glamour of certain "giant," "massive," "magnificent" objects in pork-fat or spinach-green jade as shown last winter in the collection of Mr Lee Van Ching at the Anderson Galleries.

The selective nomenclature—the chameleon's eye if we may call it so—of the connoisseur, expresses a genius for differences; analogous dissimilarities in Man Ray's *Of What Are The Young Films Dreaming*, exemplifying variously this art of comparison and synthesis. In what degree diverse subject-matters lend

themselves to association, is a question. Comprehensive paper, cloth, and leather "libraries" attest the public's docility towards editors and its respect for transcriptions. We owe much to "the excellent Mr Bohn" and are conscious of multiple value received, in Cassell's ten-cent paper series. No books in miniature could be more pleasing or in a sense more rare than Gowans's *Nature Books*, or more accomplished in providing that which could not be omitted, than the Frederick A. Stokes "Painters" Series. In issuing *The Pamphlet Poets*,¹ Simon and Schuster credit us with a fondness for poetry irrespective of the year in which it was written. Lincoln MacVeagh in his *The Little Books of New Poetry*² assumes that we can enjoy what has not had a fuss made about it; though *The Weed in the Wall*, and *Sussex Poems*, we find conspicuously unobscure. In James A. Woodburn's and the late Alexander Johnson's collection of *American Orations*,³ we have phenomenally an effect of history recalled as experience. Mr George H. Putnam, Chairman of the American Committee instituted to give co-operation in the establishment in London University of a chair for instruction in American History, emphasizes in his introduction to the fifth edition of these documents, their value as documented *feeling*. Unfamiliar yet actual, like an animal reconstructed from certain bones, they curiously evoke the past, constituting in their chronological sequence, an anthology which results as a skeleton should, in being a "body."

However expressive the content of an anthology, one notes that a yet more distinct unity is afforded in the unintentional portrait given, of the mind which brought the assembled integers together.

¹ *The Pamphlet Poets*: Carl Sandburg, edited by Hughes Mearns; Elinor Wylie, edited by Laurence Jordan; Walt Whitman, edited by Louis Untermeyer; Ralph Waldo Emerson, edited by John Erskine; Nathalia Crane, edited by Hughes Mearns; H.D., edited by Hughes Mearns. Simon & Schuster. Twenty-five cents each.

² *The Little Books of New Poetry*: *The Portrait of the Abbot*, by Richard Church; *Sussex Poems*, by Bennett Weaver; *The Weed in the Wall*, and *Other Poems*, by James McLane; *Beethoven Deaf*, and *Other Poems*, by Alec Brown; *A Sorbonne of the Hinterland*, by Jacques LeClercq; *A Poet Passes*, by D. L. Kelleher. Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press. Fifty cents each.

³ *American Orations: Studies in American Political History*. Edited by Alexander Johnson and James Albert Woodburn. With an Introduction to the Fifth Edition by George Haven Putnam. 12mo. Two volumes. 433 and 481 pages. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$5.

